LIFESTYLE / C1
How to take charge of your health

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Peso still rising, now at 41.58 to $1; BSP intervention fails to stop currency's climb

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Thousands of South Koreans help in cleanup of oil spill

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Batasan bombing suspects take back confessions

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Cop who shot at ex-gov's convoy suspended

Makati judge told: Heaven is watching

By DJ Yap

JUDGE ELMO ALAMEda of the Makati City Regional Trial Court has probably heard all sorts of arguments that lawyers have lifted from

MAKATI/ A6

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Tuesday, December 11, 2007 ★★ 6 sections / Vol. 23 / No. 3 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

Lawyer rues inaction in 'Abadilla 5' case

By Leila B. Salaverria

AFTER NEARLY THREE YEARS AND NINE justices, the review of the conviction of the so-called "Abadilla 5" seems to be moving slowly at the Court of Appeals, the lawyer for two of the convicts lamented during the observance of Human Rights Day yesterday.

Soliman Santos, who represents

LAWYER RUES/ A8

Molina wins 3rd gold; RP now 5th

By Ernesto A. Gonzales
Sports Features Editor

NAKHON RATCHASIMA, THAILAND —Filipino-Hawaiian Daniel Coakley created as much splash as Miguel Molina and Ryan Arabejo in the pool Monday night but their heroics failed to inject life into the now sputtering Philippine campaign in the 24th Southeast Asian Games.

24TH SEA GAMES

Coakley broke the SEA Games record and hurdled the Olympic qualifying standard by ruling the men's 50-meter freestyle to share the limelight with Molina, who picked up a third gold, and Arabejo, who dominated the most gruelling event in the sport, the men's 1,500 freestyle.

Henry Dagmil also rewrote his own mark in retaining his men's long jump title in athletics while wushu's Willy Wang and Mariane Mariano also came up with a pair of golds that raised the country's total to 22.

Despite the victories, the defending champion Filipinos found themselves two golds behind the Malaysians in the overall standings. Indonesia was four wins off the Philippines with 18. *(More SEAG stories in Sports, Pages A23-25.)*

In fact, the race that has now taken the fancy of everybody here is the RP-Malaysia-Indonesia fight for fourth with the top three places in the standings virtually secured going into the last five days of action.

Runaway leader Thailand remained unchallenged with 79 golds. Vietnam was second with 41 victories followed by Singapore with 32.

MOLINA/ A8

GOING FOR THE GOLD Light flyweight Alice Kate Aparri of the Philippines blasts Vietnam's Nguyen Thi Hoa, wowing the crowd at the Tumbon Mueangpug Gymnasium in Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand. RAFFY LERMA

GMA slammed for slays

Jonas ma, victims' kin mark int'l rights day

By Tina G. Santos, Jerome Aning *in Manila* and Inquirer Visayas

CLAD IN BLACK SHIRTS WITH THEIR FACES covered by black veils, female relatives of the victims of extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances held roses as they marched yesterday in Manila to mark Human Rights Day.

"The families of the victims continue to mourn because they remain deprived of justice," said Renato Reyes, spokesperson of the militant Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan).

The women in black led some 1,500 activists in calling on the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo to stop the extrajudicial killings.

"Stop state terrorism," the protesters chanted as they carried streamers denouncing Ms Arroyo on the 59th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to which the Philippines is a signatory.

The family of missing activist Jonas Burgos, led by his mother Edita, joined the mass action.

Family and friends have ac-

GMA SLAMMED/ A8

President says Ranario case proof of gov't rights policy

By Christine O. Avendaño

MARKING HUMAN RIGHTS day yesterday, President Macapagal-Arroyo said her successful bid to save the life of Filipino maid Marilou Ranario was proof of her administration's determination to protect the lives of Filipinos, whether here or abroad.

Ms Arroyo also said that her administration was looking into the concerns of other victims of

PRESIDENT/ A8

1,000 soldiers deployed for Magdalo trial

By Nikko Dizon

THE ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPpines has mobilized nearly 1,000 soldiers to secure the resumption of the Oakwood mutiny trial today where Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV will make his first public appearance since the Peninsula Manila hotel standoff.

Trillanes, a former Navy lieutenant, and others accused in the 2003 mutiny walked out of a courtroom in the Makati City Hall on Nov. 29, marched on the Peninsula and called for the resignation of President Macapagal-Arroyo in a failed bid to ignite a people power revolt.

"Definitely, they will not be able to leave the building anymore," Capt. Carlo Ferrer, spokesperson of the AFP National Capital Region Command (NCRCom), told reporters.

He said the 48th Infantry Battalion—roughly 500 to 600 men—based in Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija would augment the Philippine Air Force 750th Combat Group, an existing force of the NCRCom, that has been tasked to secure the courtroom.

Ferrer said that the NCRCom's "new security plan" for the trial featured a combination

1,000 SOLDIERS/ A6

BACK TO BLACK Dressed in black, relatives of victims of extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances march to mark International Human Rights Day on Monday. REM ZAMORA

Lim not 'forcibly dragged' by rebel soldiers, says lawyer

By Nikko Dizon

THE ARMY GENERAL WHO CALLED FOR the removal of President Macapagal-Arroyo during the Peninsula Manila hotel siege isn't the type of officer who thinks only of saving his neck.

The lawyer of detained Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim issued this clarification yesterday to correct a story that appeared in the INQUIRER on Saturday, which quoted Lim as saying that he was "forcibly dragged" by rebel soldiers to join the Peninsula siege.

Lim was testifying on Nov. 29 in the Makati trial on coup charges of Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV and 13 Magdalo soldiers when the senator and the other accused stormed out and holed themselves up at the Peninsula, along with Lim.

"We want to clarify that General Lim did not say that he was forcibly dragged out of the

LIM NOT/ A6

Biofuels gain, but food farms, forests lose

By Lina Sagaral Reyes
Inquirer Mindanao

(Second of two parts)

GOV. SALIPADA K. PENDATUN, MAGUINdanao—Arcangel Pagculan, the newly elected village chair of Sepaka, has become a jatropha convert after poor rice harvests the past two years.

SPECIAL REPORT

But using arable land for lucrative biofuels has brought to the fore a Catch-22 situation: Biofuels as a solution to the fossil oil crisis and air pollution can cause food short-

BIOFUELS / A10

RED CARPET MOMENT President Macapagal-Arroyo gets a Sunday welcome at Kuwait International Airport from Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammad Sabah Al Salem Al Sabah and other Kuwaiti officials. PCPO-MALACAÑANG

Gore sees growing people power against global warming

OSLO, NORWAY—NOBEL PEACE PRIZE winner Al Gore on Sunday said he was optimistic that a growing "people power" movement would push the world's leaders to take action to stop global warming.

The former US vice president, who likened the present climate campaign to the ban-the-bomb movement of past decades, urged leaders at a United Nations climate conference in Bali, Indonesia, to issue a mandate for a strong treaty to curb greenhouse gases.

Gore and the chief scientist of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) are scheduled to accept the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo on Monday for sounding the alarm over what the former ranking US official called the "planetary emergency" of global warming.

Gore shared the coveted prize with the IPCC, which will be represented at the awards ceremony in Oslo by its chair, Rajendra Pachauri.

"I have one reason for being optimistic, and that is that I see throughout my own country, the United States of America, and throughout the world the rising of the world's first people power movement on a global basis," Gore told reporters at the news conference.

Pointing to an international grassroots nuclear-freeze movement which helped push US President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev to sign arms controls deals in the late 1980s, Gore said the climate campaign was even broader.

GORE / A10

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2007

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Second FRONTPAGE

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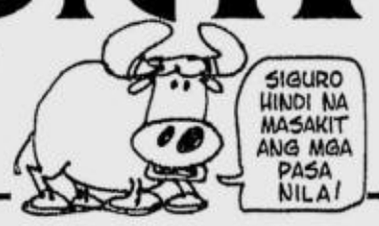
WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northeastern, Central and Southern Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers while the eastern sections of Visayas and Mindanao will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Mostly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Mostly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Mostly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Mostly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Mostly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Mostly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Mostly Cloudy	Davao	Mostly Cloudy

COMPILED BY: SCHATZI GUODALA, PDI RESEARCH/12/10/07 SOURCE: PAGASA



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Mid-Day SUERTRES Evening: 8 5 2 | 1 1 2

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Batasan bombing suspects recant

'We were tortured into admitting crime, pointing to masterminds'

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE INVESTIGATION OF THE BATASAN BOMBING hit a snag yesterday when three suspects recanted their confessions and claimed police had tortured them into implicating three prominent Basilan politicians as the masterminds.

The suspects—former Mayor Hajarun Jamiri of Tuburan, Basilan, Caidar Aunal and Adham Kusain—submitted to the Department of Justice affidavits withdrawing their statements and denying any involvement in the Nov. 13 blast at the House of Representatives that killed five people, including its alleged target, Basilan Rep. Wahab Akbar.

They also withdrew their signed statements implicating former Basilan Rep. Gerry Salappudin, Anak Mindanao Rep. Mujiv Hataman and the latter's brother Jim as the masterminds of the plot to kill Akbar.

The Philippine National Police immediately denied the suspects were tortured and threatened to file perjury charges against them.

The head of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, Senior Supt. Asher Dolina, said the CIDG had enough evidence to link the Hatamans and Salapuddin to the bombing despite the retractions.

Multiple charges

Police had filed multiple murder charges against the three suspects, one Ikram Indama, Salapuddin, Mujiv, Jim and Benjamin Hataman, and Police Officer Bayan Judda.

In his recantation, Jamiri said he was subjected to electric shock, water torture and beatings on different parts of his body, including his genitals, to make him confess to the bombing.

"Hindi rin po totoo na ang nag-utos na patayin si Congress*man* Akbar *ay si* Mujiv Hataman at Jim Hataman (It is not true that Mujiv Hataman and Jim Hataman gave the order to kill Congressman Akbar)," he said.

He denied going to Salapuddin's Filinvest home and receiving the bomb from a certain Redwan Indama to kill Wahab Akbar.

According to Jamiri, he was forced to sign two statements dated Nov. 20 and Nov. 23, and was assigned a lawyer, Confesor Sansano, whom he did not choose.

Signed out of fear

He said he signed the statements out of fear that he would be tortured again and his family harmed.

He said Basilan Gov. Jum Akbar, a widow of the congressman, spoke to him in Dolina's office on Nov. 22 and told him to implicate the Hataman brothers in the blast. He said Mayor Tahira Ismael of Lantawan, Basilan and Mayor Haber Asarul also of Sumisip, Basilan were present at the CIDG office at the time.

Jamiri said he initially refused to obey Akbar. But later that night, he was again brought to Dolina's office where he saw Mayor Sakib Salajin of Maluso, Basilan, and Mayor Joel Maturan of Ungkaya, Pukan.

He was again pressured to sign a statement, he said, adding that Ismael offered to get him into the witness protection program and to help his family financially if he would sign it.

"Huwag kang matakot dahil tutulungan ka namin. Magkaisa na tayo (Do not be afraid because we will help you. Let us be together)," he quoted Ismael telling him.

Sansano then took the statement and made him sign it without fully explaining its contents to him, he said. The lawyer told him Ismael would pay his fee.

To prove his claim of torture, Jamiri and his new lawyer, Eduardo Arriba, presented the findings of Dr. Benito Molino who had examined him.

Severe blows

Molino said signs of torture were present when he examined Jamiri. He said the former mayor's yellowish eyes and skin were most likely caused by bleeding in the soft tissues and muscles caused by severe blows from fists or blunt instruments.

"There is no doubt that Jamiri is a survivor of torture done by his captors on the 19th and 20th of November 2007," the doctor said at a press conference. He recommended that Jamiri undergo a psychological evaluation.

Arriba said the suspects would file charges against those responsible for the torture, but they would have to identify the assailants first.

In fatigues

Jamiri said he was blindfolded while being tortured, but when, at one point, he removed the cover, he saw three men. One of them was in a camouflage uniform with the tags "Atello" and "Army."

Aunal and Kusain said they were also intimidated and tortured to give false statements to the police.

Kusain allegedly owned the motorcycle to which the bomb was rigged. He had said in his contested affidavit that he lived in the Quezon City house of Salapuddin, a friend of his father's who sent him to school and got him a job.

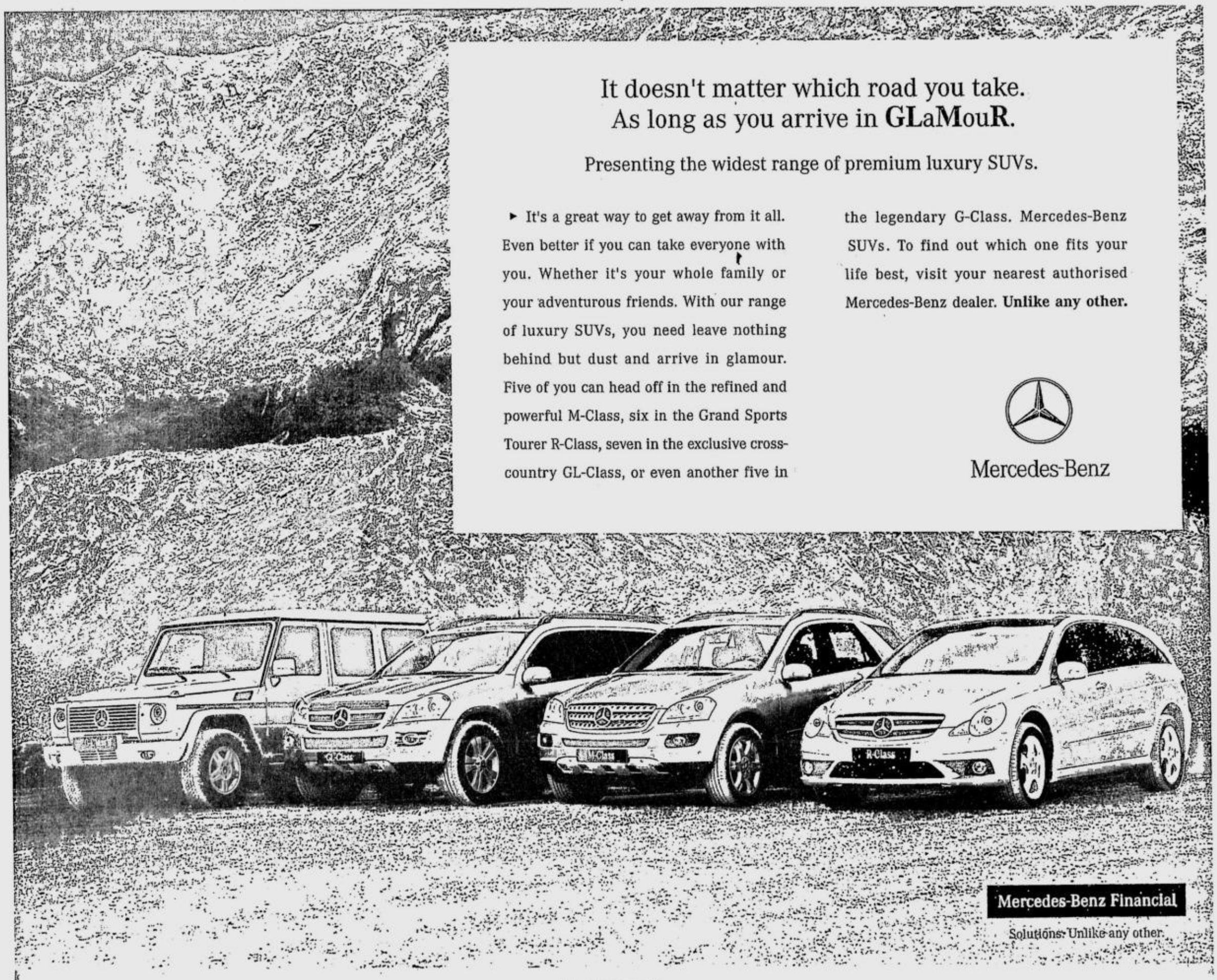
Hataman yesterday reiterated his denial of involvement in the bombing, saying, "This is really politically motivated." *With reports from Alcuin Papa and Christian V. Esguerra*

WHAT'S INSIDE

GMA SAYS RP grateful to emir of Kuwait for life of Pinay maid /A4

SUMILAO farmers: We never agreed to SMC hog farm /A4

RIZAL, LAGUNA towns worst polluters of Laguna Lake /A4



Cha-cha drive coming to new life in House

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE SUPPOSEDLY DEAD AND buried campaign for Charter change has been resurrected.

Three years before the 2010 presidential election, administration lawmakers are again pushing for Charter change—either through a constitutional convention or a people's initiative—to amend the 1987 Constitution.

The committee on constitutional amendments chaired by Rep. Victor Ortega is set to tackle at 1:30 p.m. today at least three bills and a resolution eyeing Charter change.

Administration congressmen mustered the effort despite the yearlong moratorium on Charter change efforts promised by Speaker Jose de Venecia, who had consistently failed in his campaign for a switch to parliamentary system of government.

"There might be a hidden agenda here instead of simply streamlining the operations and structure of government," Senior Deputy Minority Leader Roilo Golez told the INQUIRER in an interview. "So expect the minority to closely watch and oppose this."

House Bills No. 1752 and No. 1876 by Representatives Raul Gonzalez Jr. and Carmelo Lazatin, respectively, call for the creation of a "constitutional convention to amend or revise the present Constitution."

HB No. 2479 of Rep. Roque Ablan Jr. wants amendments by way of a people's initiative.

A separate resolution by Sorsogon Rep. Jose Solis calls for the adoption by the lower chamber of the proposed amendments of the Malacañang-created constitutional consultative commission.

Aside from these bills and resolution, Ortega's committee would also tackle a study on the "different modes of amending the Constitution" courtesy of Agusan del Norte Rep. Edelmiro Amante.

Representatives Pedro Romualdo and Elpidio Barzaga Jr. would also present a study on proposed amendments to the political provisions of the 1987 Constitution. Still another study on proposed changes in the Charter's socioeconomic provisions would be made available by Rep. Giorgidi Aggabao.

Golez was convinced the drive for Charter change would eventually settle on a people's initiative. He said constitutional convention was bound to fail because of expected disapproval by the Senate.

Last year, the Supreme Court—by a slim 8-7 vote—junked the people's initiative campaign by Raul Lambino's Sigaw ng Masa, describing the effort as a "grand deception" and a "gigantic fraud."

Also working against Charter change was the reported political conflict between President Macapagal-Arroyo and De Venecia, Golez said.

Keep NBN case alive to kill it, SC urged

By Leila B. Salaverria

ALTHOUGH THE PRESIDENT shelved the controversial National Broadband Network (NBN) project with China, Iloilo Vice Gov. Rolex Suplico still wants the Supreme Court to annul the $329-million deal in order to drive the "final nail in [its] coffin."

Suplico yesterday opposed the plea of the Office of the Solicitor General to dismiss the case against the Department of Transportation and Communication and ZTE Corp. of China on the grounds that it was moot.

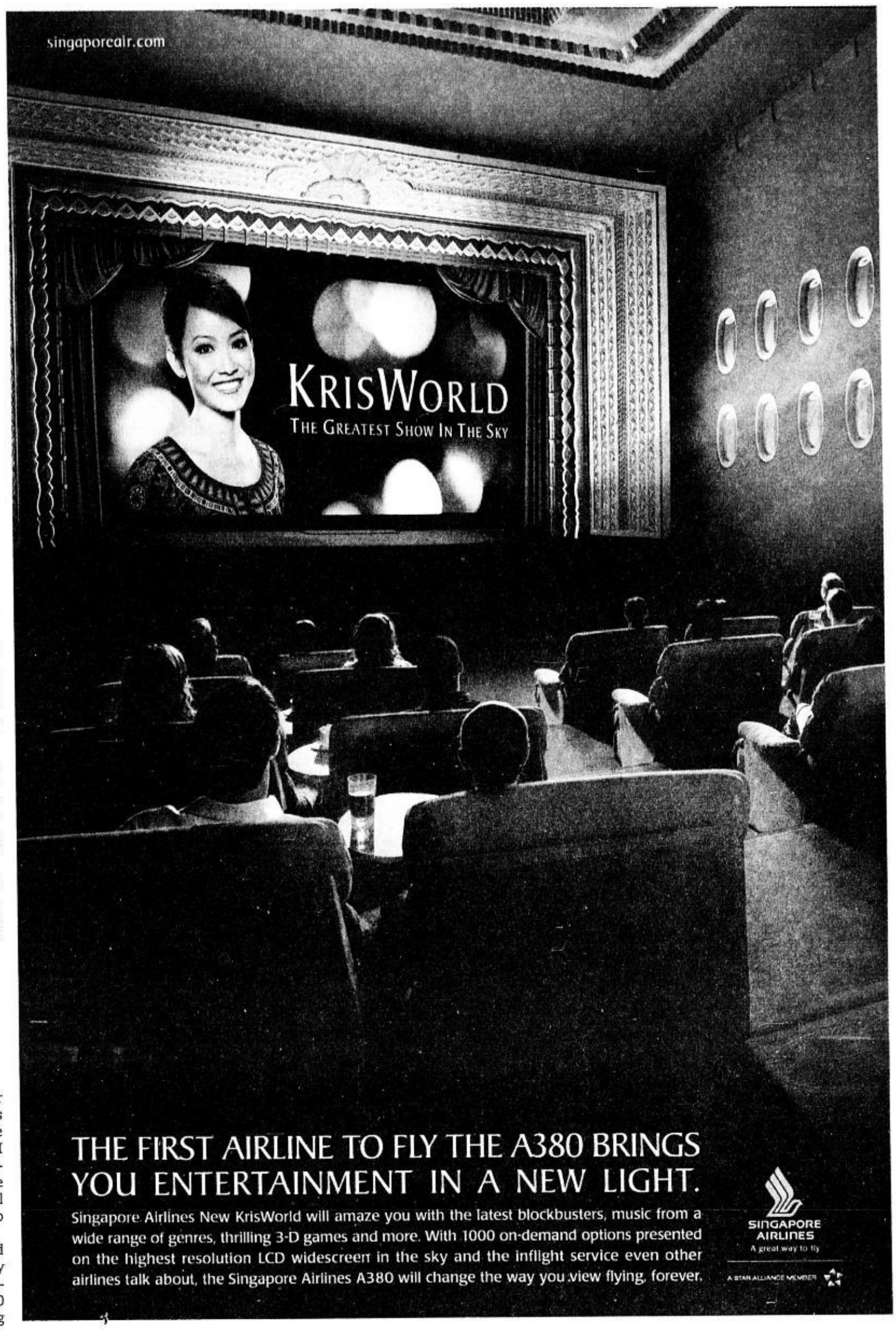
"The final nail in the coffin of the ZTE-DOTC-NBN project must be driven home. This honorable [court] must not allow it to be resurrected or revived in some other guise or incarnation on the pretext that the issue has been mooted. Let this case and the ruling of this honorable court stand, like the Constitution, as a reminder of the primacy of the rule of law over the fickleness and parochial (oftentimes pecuniary and transactional) interests of rulers," he said.

"Government may be entitled to its honest (or harebrained) mistakes and mothballed endeavors, but it must not be allowed to violate the law, public policy, and the Constitution in justifying and insisting on said mistakes," he said.

Suplico said the deal was forged through "rigged selection proceedings" and violated public bidding requirements for such projects.

President Macapagal-Arroyo suspended the NBN project after the son of Speaker Jose de Venecia claimed he was offered a $10-million bribe by then Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos to withdraw his company's bid to undertake the project. Jose "Joey" de Venecia III also told a Senate committee investigating the scandal that the President's husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo, personally told him to "back off" the project.

Former National Economic and Development Authority Secretary General Romulo Neri likewise accused Abalos of offering him P200 million in exchange for approving the project.



GMA: RP forever grateful to Kuwaiti emir

By Christine O. Avendaño, Jerome Aning and Margaux C. Ortiz

THANKING KUWAITI'S RULER FOR sparing the life of Filipino maid Marilou Ranario, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday said the nation and its people, including overseas Filipino workers, would never forget "this act of generosity."

In a statement issued on the eve of her return from an overnight stay in Kuwait, the President said she was "deeply grateful for the compassion of the emir" in commuting Ranario's death sentence to life imprisonment.

"I hope it brings some small comfort to her family," Ms Arroyo said. "On behalf of the Philippine people and our overseas workers who often live lonely lives abroad, we will not forget this act of generosity."

The President flew to Kuwait on Sunday to plead with Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmed Al Sabah for Ranario, life after she was sentenced to death by hanging for killing her employer in 2005.

The emir told the President that he would not sign off on Ranario's death sentence because of Ms Arroyo's personal appeal. He promised he would reduce Ranario's penalty if she would be able to secure the forgiveness of her victim's relatives.

Happy news

In Manila, Ranario's younger sister Wilfreda, 25, hugged the messenger of the good news.

"I could not believe it. It was the happiest news I've heard since [my sister] was sentenced to death last month," Wilfreda told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

She said their parents, Rosario and Encarnacion, had been informed of the development. The couple had returned to their native Surigao del Norte after talking to the President in November.

"Our family is happy now that Marilou has been spared from the death sentence," Wilfreda said.

She's innocent

However, she said they were not content with the commutation "because we are convinced that Marilou is innocent. We want her freed from jail and reunited with her children."

"We really want her to come home, especially this Christmas," Wilfreda said, her voice breaking.

Ranario, 33, left her two children in Tubod, Surigao del Norte to work as a maid in Kuwait in 2003.

In January 2005, she was arrested for stabbing her female employer, Najat Mahmoud Faraj Mubarak, who died.

Migrante International chair Connie Bragas-Regalado said Ranario's commutation of sentence was a "victory" for their group.

Two years

"For almost two years we have been campaigning for Marilou's life," she said yesterday in a phone interview.

"The emir's promise to commute Marilou's death sentence is a victory for her family and all those who persevered in the international campaign to save her life," Migrante said in a statement.

"We commit to forwarding the campaign for Marilou until she—and other OFWs on death row are released and repatriated to the Philippines. Otherwise, the Arroyo administration fails them and their families anew," the statement said.

Citing figures from the Department of Foreign Affairs, Migrante said there were at least 26 other OFWs on death row and around 5,000 Filipinos imprisoned around the world.

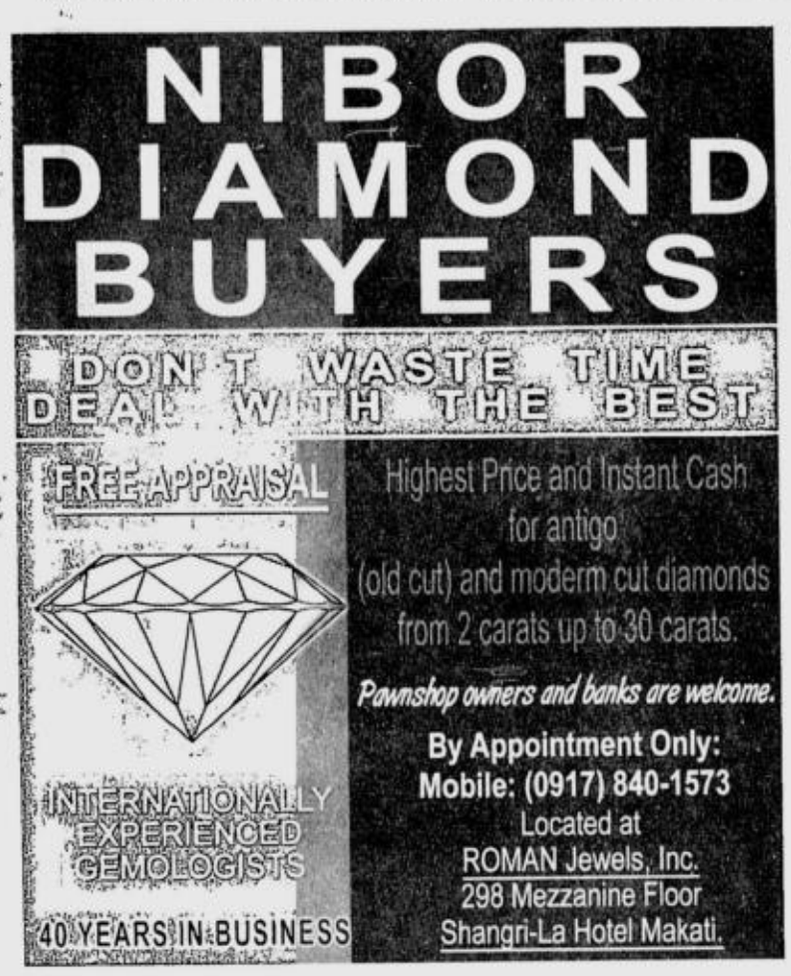
'Madam, help my wife'

Among them is May Vecina, a 28-year-old domestic worker from North Cotabato who reportedly killed her ward and wounded two others. Sentenced to death in July this year, her case is now before Kuwait's Court of Cassation.

Vecina's husband, Leo, said he hoped the President would also be able to save his wife from the gallows.

"She helped Ranario. I hope and pray she will do the same for my wife. Madam, please help my wife and all the other OFWs in similar situations," he said between sobs.

Leo said like other OFWs toiling in other countries, his wife had only one thing in mind and that was to help her family out of poverty. *With reports from Edwin O. Fernandez and Franklin A. Caliguid, Inquirer Mindanao*



Tillers: We didn't agree to hog farm

By Jerome Aning

THE HIGAONON FARMERS FROM SUMILAO, Bukidnon, who are fighting for the return of their land denied giving their assent to the hog farm erected on the 144-hectare property by new owner San Miguel Foods Inc.

Renato Peñas, one of the 55 farmers who walked to Manila for two months to press their claim, recalled that on Nov. 26, 2003, representatives of San Miguel Corp. accompanied by town officials led by Mayor Mary Ann Baula came to the Higaonon community and presented the company's development plans.

"The hog farm was not on our agenda. As in all of our regular barangay meetings, we had to sign an attendance sheet. We asked a few questions about the project. Just like that. No further discussions. On Dec. 2, 2003, there was a Sangguniang Bayan resolution endorsing the project. It did not undergo deliberations in the barangay council," Peñas, a barangay kagawad, said.

Accompanied by activist priests and nuns, the farmers, each carrying a copy of their 60-page position paper on the dispute, tried to enter the Department of Agrarian Reform building in Quezon City yesterday to present the document to Secretary Nasser Pangandaman.

DAR security personnel, however, allowed only one of the farmers and their lawyers in. The farmers were thus able to file their position paper—which Pangandaman had required of both contending parties to settle the issue—at 8:16 p.m.

Federation of Philippine Industries president Jesus Arranza, meanwhile, appealed for sobriety in resolving the dispute and aired his suspicion that local corn buyers afraid of losing out to SMFI could be behind the farmers' objection to the hog farm.

Emotions over the law

"This dramatic march is apparently trying to seek and gain sympathy and touch the emotions of the people. As we all know, people tend to empathize rather than view things with objectivity. If what will be followed is the rule of emotion instead of the rule of law, I doubt very much if businessmen in their right senses would still invest in rural areas," Arranza said in a press conference in Makati City.

Arranza said he could not understand why the Sumilao farmers—who are primarily corn-growers—objected to the project despite its "overwhelming benefits."

"Only parties with vested interests would oppose such a plan—probably the local corn buyers who will have to face SMC as a competitor and may virtually lose their grip on a seemingly monopolistic buying situation," he said.

San Miguel, an FPI member, bought the 144-ha property being claimed by the farmers from Norberto Quisumbing in 2002. The farmers said SMFI, as the new owner, "inherited" Quisumbing's pledge to convert the property into an agro-industrial zone, as required by DAR rules.

Failure to launch

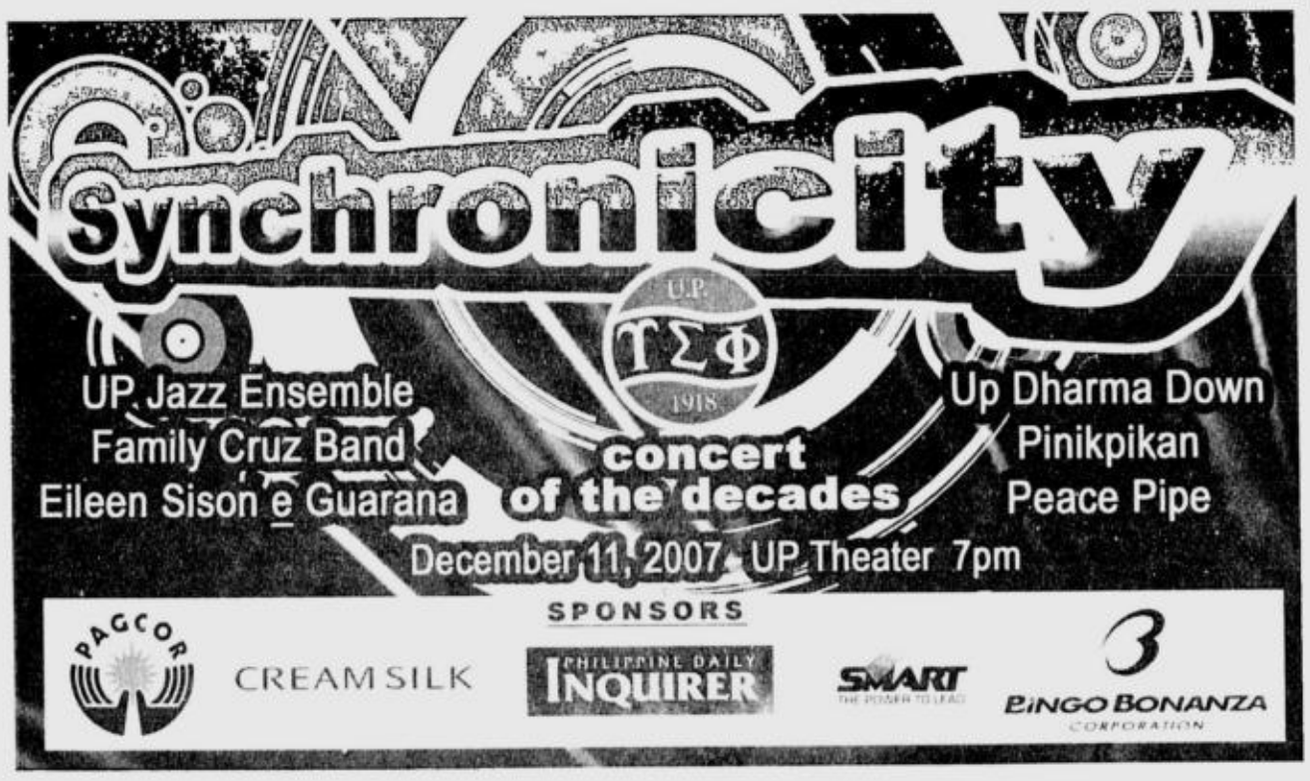
The farmers said SMFI failed to undertake the original development plan—which called for the construction of an agro-industrial park, cultural and livelihood centers, sports complex, hotel and restaurant, among other things—so that under DAR rules, the land should revert to them under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program.

Arranza claimed some of the farmers were beneficiaries of the 66-ha estate owned by Salvador Carlos adjacent to the SMFI property. This was earlier confirmed by Pangandaman, who said that about 20 of the 55 farmers had been awarded portions of the Carlos estate in 1999 and 2003.

According to DAR records, among the marchers who owned land in the Carlos estate were Peñas, Napoleon Merida Jr., chair of San Vicente Landless Farmers Association, and the farmer's spokesperson Paterno Tuminhay.

"Now if that is the case, what in the world are these farmers, who are already CLOA beneficiaries, doing here in Manila when they should be tilling the lots granted to them under CARP?" Arranza said.

He called on the various sectors of the society, particularly religious groups, "to view this event using reason and not emotion."



Rizal, Laguna towns named worst polluters of largest lake

By TJ Burgonio

WHILE THEY'RE FAMED HAVENS FOR artists and wood carvers, Angono in Rizal and Paete in Laguna rank among the worst polluters of Laguna Lake.

The two towns, together with Biñan, also in Laguna, and Taytay in Rizal, yesterday were named recipients of the "Nakasusulasok Awards" (Shameful Awards) by the Laguna Lake Development Authority.

The four municipalities operate open dumps close to the lake shore, and contribute to its pollution, LLDA general manager Edgar Manda said at a press briefing.

The dumps were ecological "time bombs" that could result in a tragedy of "immeasurable magnitude," said Manda, who also disclosed the LLDA's assessment of the environmental performance of 14 cities and 47 other towns around the lake this year.

"I hope that their conscience gets pricked and they will do something about the ongoing pollution," he said.

Outstanding

On the other hand, the LLDA recognized Sta. Cruz town in Laguna as the "most outstanding local government unit on environmental performance" for operating a material recovery facility where biodegrable wastes are recycled.

Also recognized were Malvar town in Batangas; Teresa, Rizal; Los Baños, Laguna, and Quezon City for their environmental projects on waste management.

Manda admitted the LLDA, hobbled by lack of funds and logistics, didn't have its own police force to go after the local government units polluting the lake.

"We need discipline. We have only one patrol boat to monitor over 10,000 industries in the 900-sq km lake. We can't do it alone," he said.

Manda had earlier warned the lake would be dead in five years if no steps were taken to arrest its worsening condition.

Laguna de Bay, located between Laguna and Rizal provinces in Luzon, is the largest lake in the Philippines and the second largest inland freshwater body in Southeast Asia.

Phased out by 2006

Open dumps should have been phased out by 2004 and controlled dumps by 2006, under the Ecological Waste Management Act of 2000. Local government units are mandated to enforce this law.

According to the LLDA, other localities with running open dumps polluting the lake are San Pablo City; Alaminos, Calauan, Liliw, Kalayaan, Mabitac, Pagsanjan and Sta. Maria towns in Laguna; Binangonan and Cardona in Rizal; Lucban, Quezon, and Pateros and Taguig in Metro Manila.

Another major contributor to the lake pollution were the 52,000 families in various towns that had encroached on the lakeshore without toilet facilities, Manda said.

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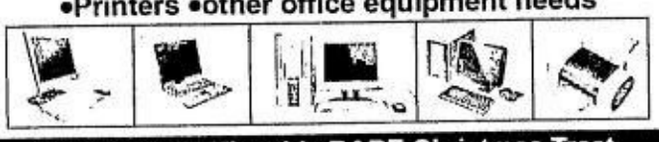

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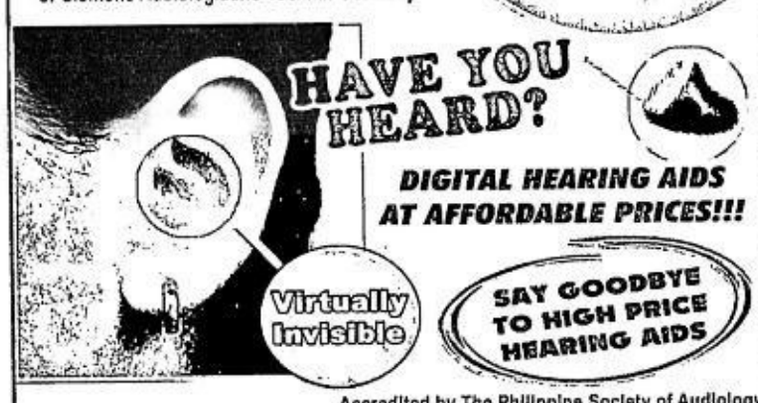

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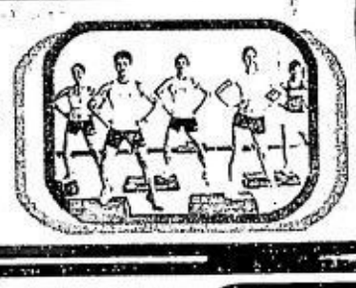

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Per DTI-NCR Permit #3986, Series of 2007

GMA reiterates iron policy on Trillanes et al.

By Christine O. Avendaño

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO vowed Sunday night that the full force of the law would be applied on Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV and the others involved in the takeover of the Peninsula Manila hotel on Nov. 29.

Ms Arroyo spoke to the Filipino community in Kuwait about the Peninsula incident after securing from the Kuwaiti emir a commutation of the death sentence on Filipino maid Marilou Ranario for killing her Kuwaiti employer in 2005.

"It's very clear that the actions of these few desperate men only showed they are out of touch with the hopes and dreams of the average Filipino," Ms Arroyo said. She said ordinary Filipinos wanted political stability, a bright economic future and social justice.

That was why, she said, the actions of these "misguided men" only served to "sabotage the aspirations of everyone here and the aspirations of Filipinos."

"The transgressors will not hold our nation hostage with impunity. *Paparusahin sila ng buong higpit ng batas* (The full force of the law will be applied). Justice shall be served and the interests of the people upheld," Ms Arroyo said.

Ms Arroyo was scheduled to arrive in Manila today after an eight-day official visit to Spain and Britain. She stopped in Kuwait en route home to appeal personally to Sheik Sabah Al Ahmed Al Sabah for clemency for Ranario.

Ms Arroyo, who had planned a four-hour stop in Kuwait Sunday but agreed to stay overnight upon the invitation of the Kuwaiti ruler, said her administration was determined to achieve unity, development, peace and prosperity.

Trillanes told Pimentel media presence prevented bloodbath

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

SENATE MINORITY LEADER AQUILINO Pimentel Jr. said yesterday that Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV had told him that the presence of journalists prevented a bloodbath during the Nov. 29 standoff at the Peninsula Manila hotel.

In a speech recalling his visit to Trillanes at his Camp Crame cell last week, Pimentel said that Trillanes hinted at "dark plots" based on what he felt was "an overreaction of the authorities in getting them out of the hotel and arresting them."

Trillanes believed there was no need to lob more tear gas canisters into the hotel because his group had decided to come out peacefully, said Pimentel, adding that the rebels were worried about the safety of the civilians.

Among those in the hotel were former Vice President Tito Guingona, 79; Bishop Emeritus Julio Labayen, 81, and the media people covering the incident.

"Still, the authorities tear-gassed them and cut off all lights at the lobby," Pimentel said.

Easy targets

"It was as if the authorities wanted to smoke them out of the upper part of the hotel and make them easy targets at the lobby as they were surrendering. Luckily, the media people followed them all the way," said Pimentel repeating Trillanes' account.

"In short, the senator believed that the presence of the media prevented blood from being shed in the whole affair," Pimentel said.

The refusal of some journalists to vacate what had been deemed by the police as a crime scene raised questions on how far the media should be allowed to operate in situations like the Peninsula takeover.

No uprising

Pimentel said shots were fired by the police "to make it appear that there was an armed uprising going on in the Pen when in fact there was none."

As proof that they did not want to use force, Trillanes claimed his group could have held Philippine National Police Director Geary Barias hostage when he came over to talk to them before the 3 p.m. surrender deadline.

While Trillanes and his men were treated fairly in their cells, Pimentel said that the senator was "kicked and trampled upon by certain officers after they were made to lie down in the aftermath of their arrest and they were also subjected to a lot of verbal abuse."

Pimentel said Trillanes' group condemned Barias for "his utter inability to exercise effective control of his men in suppressing the Manila Pen incident."

"It showed, they added, that Barias was not fit to lead the PNP as he is rumored to be the next PNP Director General," Pimentel said.

1,000 soldiers deployed for Magdalo trial

From page A1

of forces from the AFP, the Southern Police District and the Philippine National Police Custodial Unit which has custody of the Oakwood mutineers who took part in the Peninsula Manila standoff.

Moreover, the "gaps" the AFP saw in the previous security plan "have been corrected and additional measures (are) in place to avoid a repeat of the accused staging a walkout," he said.

Ferrer said these "gaps" included the failure of the AFP and the police to check all the rooms at the City Hall, called "paneling."

"We suspect that the firearms of the rebels were hidden in one or two rooms that were not checked," Ferrer said.

Ferrer also said that there would be several layers of security measures to be implemented. "We are considering that anything can happen (today). We are securing even the Pasig River," Ferrer said.

Handcuffed to escorts

He said the NCRCom was waiting for the court's reply on whether it would allow the AFP's request to keep the accused handcuffed to their military escorts throughout the hearing.

"If they want to go to the toilet, they will be handcuffed to their escorts going there," Ferrer said.

Asked if the AFP was certain that none of the soldiers it would deploy would turn out to be sympathetic to the Magdalo soldiers, Ferrer replied: "We are sure that the units assigned to the NCRCom will not turn against the military."

Ferrer, a member of Philippine Military Academy Class 1995 to which most of the leaders of the Oakwood mutineers, called Magdalo, belong, said that the group had been unable to "recruit" any more soldiers.

Faeldon

He dismissed suggestions that the wily Marine Capt. Nicanor Faeldon, a Magdalo leader who remained "unaccounted for" after he escaped from the Peninsula, could recruit disgruntled soldiers to the Trillanes cause and therefore remained a threat.

The 36-year-old Trillanes, Army Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim, and the 10 other Magdalo soldiers have been detained at the Camp Crame custodial management unit since the standoff.

Lim, 52, a former Scout Ranger Regiment commander, was a defense witness during the Nov. 29 hearing. He was placed under arrest following the failed February 2006 coup attempt.

The military escorts, the NCRCom troops and local police tasked to secure Makati City Hall did not stop Trillanes and his group from marching on the Peninsula, 3 kilometers away, fearing a gun battle that could hurt innocent bystanders.

Trillanes, Lim, former Vice President Teofisto Guingona, retired Bishop Julio Labayen, "running priest" Robert Reyes and 32 soldiers and civilians have been charged with rebellion in connection with the Peninsula standoff.

Probable cause

"I will resolve the motions for judicial determination of probable cause by Thursday or Friday at the latest," said Judge Elmo Alameda of the Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 150 who will handle the Peninsula case.

In yesterday's hearing of a motion filed by Reyes, Alameda said he needed at least 24 hours to go over the evidence to determine if there was a basis for his indictment.

If the judge finds probable cause, the court will acquire jurisdiction over the accused and they will have to face trial. If he finds no probable cause, the case will be dismissed.

The Reyes motion, one of several, asked the court to reverse the finding of the Department of Justice panel of inquest prosecutors that there was probable cause to charge the respondents with rebellion. *With reports from Alcuin Papa and DJ Yap*

Lim not 'forcibly dragged' by rebel soldiers, says lawyer

From page A1

courtroom ... He is not out to save his neck," lawyer Vicente Verdadero said in a phone interview.

The walkout prompted trial Judge Oscar Pimentel to cite Trillanes and his coaccused in contempt but made no findings against Lim.

Verdadero clarified that it was actually Pimentel's contempt order that described how Lim was bodily dragged out of the courtroom by one of the Magdalo soldiers.

Judge's own words

Pimentel's order said: "Ltsg. James Layug, wearing a head cover, suddenly rushed out from the back and took by force Gen. Danilo Lim to the surprise of all those present at that time ... Gen. Lim was forcibly dragged out of the courtroom."

Lim later marched with Trillanes and the Magdalo soldiers to the Peninsula where, at a press conference shown on television, he read a manifesto calling for the ouster of Ms Arroyo.

State prosecutors have filed rebellion charges against Lim, Trillanes and more than 30 others, including civilians, for their involvement in the Peninsula siege.

Motion to transfer

Verdadero cited the Pimentel order last week when he asked the Makati court hearing the rebellion charges to transfer Lim to Camp Capinpin in Tanay, Rizal.

Lim, former commander of the Scout Rangers, is currently detained in Camp Crame with the others involved in the Peninsula siege.

Judicial, impartial account

Lim was previously held in Camp Capinpin, along with other soldiers accused of involvement in the February 2006 coup plot.

"What we quoted was a judicial, impartial account of what transpired in the courtroom [on Nov. 29]," Verdadero said.

The motion seeking Lim's transfer of detention pointed out that it is at Camp Capinpin where a general court-martial regularly holds the trial of Lim and 27 other officers in connection with the 2006 plot.

Makati judge told: Heaven is watching

From page A1

law books, but nothing apparently prepared him for one that invoked no less than the "Big Book" found at the Pearly Gates.

"Whatever it is that you do in this case will be recorded in heaven," a deadpan Frank Chavez told Alameda during a politically charged hearing yesterday. "I am sure Saint Peter will take care of you."

The feisty attorney and former solicitor general fittingly made reference to divine reckoning to spice up his oral arguments seeking the release of his client, Fr. Robert Reyes, one of the alleged participants in the Nov. 29 Peninsula hotel uprising.

Chavez' otherworldly warning drew chuckles not only from Alameda but also from several priests and nuns in the packed gallery of the Makati RTC-Branch 150.

Among them was Pampanga Gov. Ed Panlilio, a priest-turned-politician, who said he and Reyes had been close friends for 30 years.

"When it comes to advocacies, we share many common stands, especially with (regard to) electoral and political reforms," he said. "Definitely, he is for meaningful change in the country," Panlilio said of Reyes in an interview after the hearing.

Also known as "the running priest" for his running for political advocacies, Reyes is facing rebellion charges as one of the civilians seen holding a press conference at the hotel in support of the renegade band of military officers led by Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV, a former Navy lieutenant.

Reyes' sympathizers in the courtroom, whom Chavez described as "prayer warriors," included Leah Navarro of the Black & White Movement and about 20 other civil society leaders.

The hearing tackled a motion asking that Reyes be released to Chavez's custody and assuring the court that the outspoken Catholic priest would attend all the hearings requiring his presence.

In his oral arguments, Chavez claimed that based on TV news footage of the seven-hour Peninsula standoff, there were no antigovernment "sound bites" that were recorded coming from Reyes.

Chavez also noted that neither of the two arrest affidavits prepared by the police specified the nature of Reyes' offense and that the documents merely tagged him as one of those arrested after the siege.

SUPPORTERS of detained Fr. Robert Reyes, led by lawyer Frank Chavez and the priest's parents, Carling and Natividad Reyes, raise clenched fists to show solidarity for the activist cleric outside the Makati City Hall on Monday. AFP

He said Reyes, who earlier that day celebrated Mass near the Ninoy Aquino Monument on Ayala Avenue, only went to the Peninsula to check out what was happening there.

The lawyer said his client was only "invited" by Trillanes' group to come over and that Reyes, before proceeding to the Peninsula, asked the rebel officers whether he could actually enter the hotel or just remain at its perimeter.

"Father Reyes is a man of God, a man of peace," Chavez said.

"If you research the actions of Father Reyes, he always took issue with (various) forms of injustice. He was running marathons and offering Masses, but he never took up arms against the government."

"This government is afraid of its own shadow," he added. "This government will not fall or collapse if we also release Father Reyes."

Chavez said Reyes should have been freed early on like the other prominent civilians who were arrested at the Pen, namely, former Vice President Teofisto Guingona, Bishop Julio Labayen, former University of the Philippines president Francisco Nemenzo and artist Bibeth Orteza Siguion-Reyna.

The four were released by the police for humanitarian and health considerations.

But Alameda said he could not yet rule on the motion pending the resolution of another issue raised by Reyes.

In a separate motion, Reyes had asked the court to reverse a ruling by the Department of Justice which found probable cause to indict him and the other respondents for rebellion.

Alameda said he would decide on the motion questioning the ruling either on Thursday or Friday.

The judge also said he had yet to come across jurisprudence that allowed the release of a respondent on recognizance in a case involving a nonbailable offense.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, December 11, 2007
2nd Week of Advent
Damasus

1st Reading: Is 40:1-11
Gospel: Matthew 18:12-14

Jesus said to his disciples, "What do you think of this? If someone has a hundred sheep and one of them strays, won't he leave the ninety-nine on the hillside, and go to look for the stray one? And I tell you: when he finally finds it, he is more pleased about it than about the ninety-nine that did not get lost. It is the same with your Father in heaven: there they don't want even one of these little ones to be lost."

Commentary

Isaiah's visions are of a God not just of Israel, but of all nations and of the earth itself—mighty in power, vast in creation, calling every person by name. God is strength that shares its power. God is knowledge that is beyond comprehension and anyone who puts their hope in God will "soar as with eagle's wings and will run and not grow weary, walk and not grow faint." Are we renewing our life, our being, in this God or are we squandering our energies and attention elsewhere?

It is time to come back to God. Are we weary from doing the work of God? Do we find life burdensome because we are collecting clutter, finding ourselves tangled in the mesh of our plans and projects? It is time to take the yoke of the cross, the yoke of community, the yoke of baptismal life upon us and learn to walk Jesus' way. This way is gentle, humble, lowly, without violence, greed, grasping, or fear. This yoke is the shadow of God upon us in Jesus.

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2007 worst year for RP education, say youth

By Jerry E. Esplanada

CITING TUITION HIKES OF UP TO 600 percent and yearly cuts in the budgets of state-run tertiary schools, militant organizations have called 2007 the "worst year for Philippine education."

At the same time, they assailed officials of the Commission on Higher Education (CHEd) for ignoring repeated requests for a dialogue on their concerns.

League of Filipino Students (LFS) national chair Vencer Crisostomo said "local student council leaders last week requested for a meeting anew with chair Romulo Neri and other CHEd officials but they refused."

Like the LFS, Anakbayan, another militant youth group, assailed the Arroyo administration for the "state of disrepair" of the education sector.

Anakbayan chair Eleanor de Guzman said that "since (President Macapagal-) Arroyo assumed office in 2001, the state of the country's education sector has acquired damage beyond repair."

De Guzman noted that "aside from the imposition of exorbitant tuition hikes by higher education institutions (HEI), yearly cuts in the budgets of state colleges and universities have taken their toll."

"Yearly, we also see a significant increase in student dropout rates because of government's neglect (for HEI concerns)," she said.

600% tuition increase

De Guzman cited "the 600 percent tuition increase imposed at Eulogio "Amang" Rodriguez Institute of Science and Technology (Earist), a state college, which resulted in a 50-percent drop in enrollment this school year."

"From last year's P15 per unit, Earist currently collects P100 per unit from freshmen. Laboratory fees also increased from P25 to P500 for both new and returning students," she said.

At the University of the Philippines, tuition has risen "by approximately 300 percent—from P300 to P1,000 per unit—bringing the cost of a UP education to P30,000-40,000 per semester, just a few pesos shy of the tuition at Ateneo de Manila and De La Salle universities."

"The same tuition hike looms at Polytechnic University of the Philippines, which has a pending proposal for a 525-percent increase from P12.50 to P75 per unit," De Guzman said.

More antigovernment protests

"This is really the worst year for the education sector. Compounded by political scandals, students are now faced with the glaring fact that the Arroyo administration has been spending more on corrupt practices at the expense of our youth's education," she said.

Both the LFS and Anakbayan warned of more antigovernment protests.

"*Babahain namin ng protesta si* Gloria (We shall overwhelm Gloria with protests)," De Guzman said.

Militant groups also called for a congressional investigation of the CHEd's tuition policy.

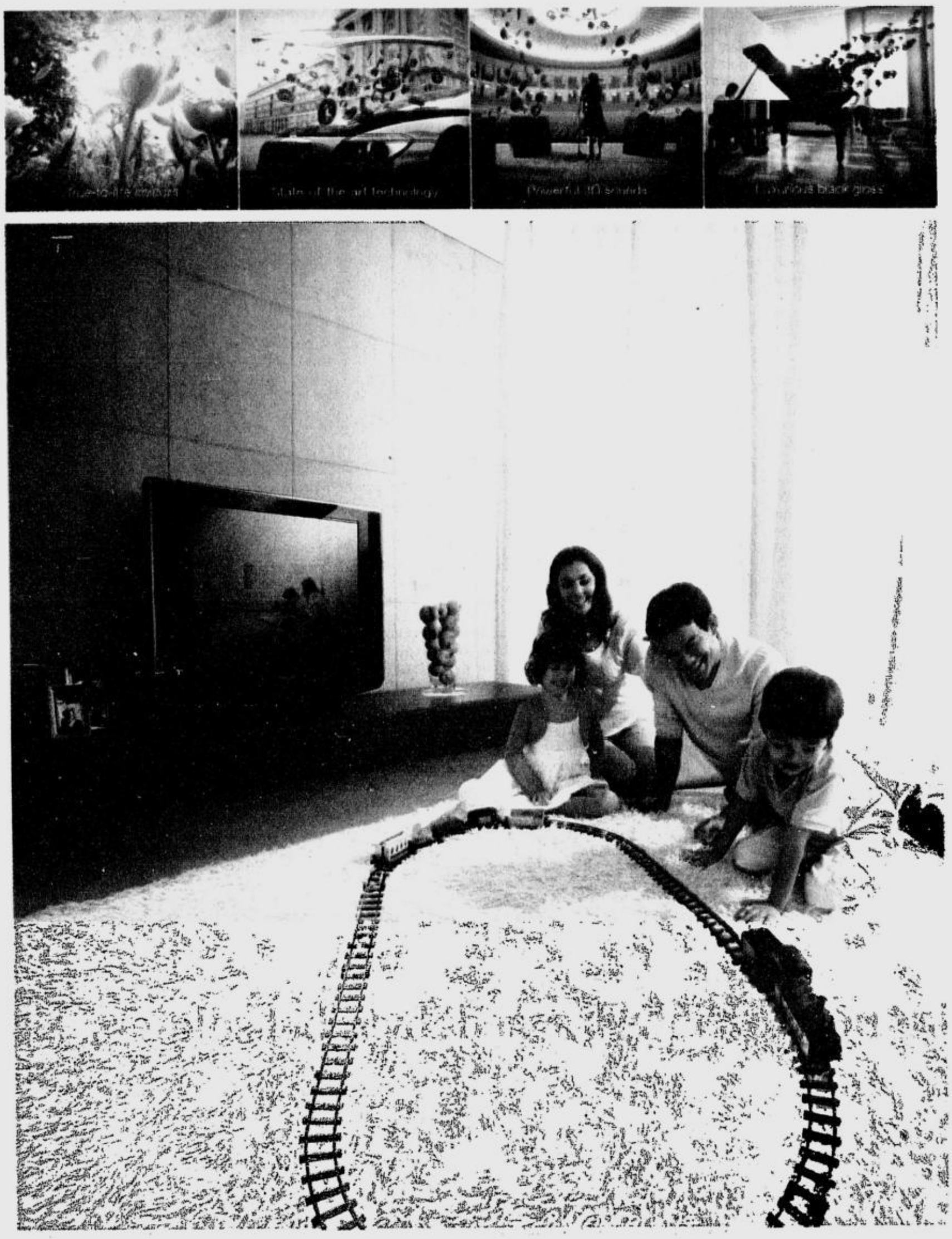
Last month, CHEd said it was considering reimposing the "tuition cap" which the body suspended early this year.

CHEd Executive Director William Medrano told the INQUIRER the agency was "studying [whether] to put back the policy."

Both Neri and Commissioner Nona Ricafort assured students the tuition issue was "being discussed" by the agency.

CHEd Memo No. 14 provided for a tuition cap based on the national inflation rate of over 6.2 percent.

The directive also called for prior consultations with students, among other groups, before schools hiked tuition and other fees.



GMA slammed for slays; victims' kin mark rights day

From page A1

cused security forces of abducting 36-year-old Jonas, an agriculturist who had been training peasants in organic farming.

The military has denied it had anything to do with the abduction of Jonas, son of the late press freedom icon Joe Burgos, at a mall in Quezon City on April 28. But the plate number of the vehicle used by the kidnappers was traced to an impounded vehicle at the 56th Infantry Battalion compound in Norzagaray, Bulacan.

Other protest marches were held in key cities in the Visayas and other parts of the country.

"All efforts must be exerted to make the Arroyo regime accountable," Bayan said in a statement.

"Using the internationally accepted principles of command responsibility as basis, the people must pressure the regime so that justice for the victims is served," it said.

Philip Alston, the United Nations' special rapporteur on extrajudicial killings, earlier this month released a final report on the Philippines which blamed the military for the killings.

He said soldiers were "systematically hunting down" the leaders of leftist organizations as part of the overall anti-insurgency campaign.

Over the weekend, Jaro Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), said most of the time the violators of human rights in the country were public servants and elected officials.

Full circle

Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar V. Cruz warned that the evil that was the violation of human rights would come full circle.

Cruz said human rights violators were unconsciously demeaning themselves by strongly inviting others to look down on them with contempt and ridicule.

"How true is the saying that violent individuals usually die of violence," he said in a statement.

At a rally in Quezon City, the human rights group Karapatan came up with a "Medalya de Horror," which it said it would award to President Arroyo for her poor record in defending human rights.

Jigs Clamor, Karapatan deputy secretary general, said the medal was also a parody of the medal that a Spanish university gave Ms Arroyo for her adherence to human rights during her weeklong visit to Europe last week.

"We want to register our opposition to what the Spanish [university] did. Ms Arroyo is the biggest violator of human rights," Clamor said.

Drop in killings

Karapatan said that since Ms Arroyo came to power in January 2001 up to October this year, a total of 887 killings were reported.

In a report, Karapatan said that the number of extrajudicial killings dropped to 68 this year from 209 in 2006.

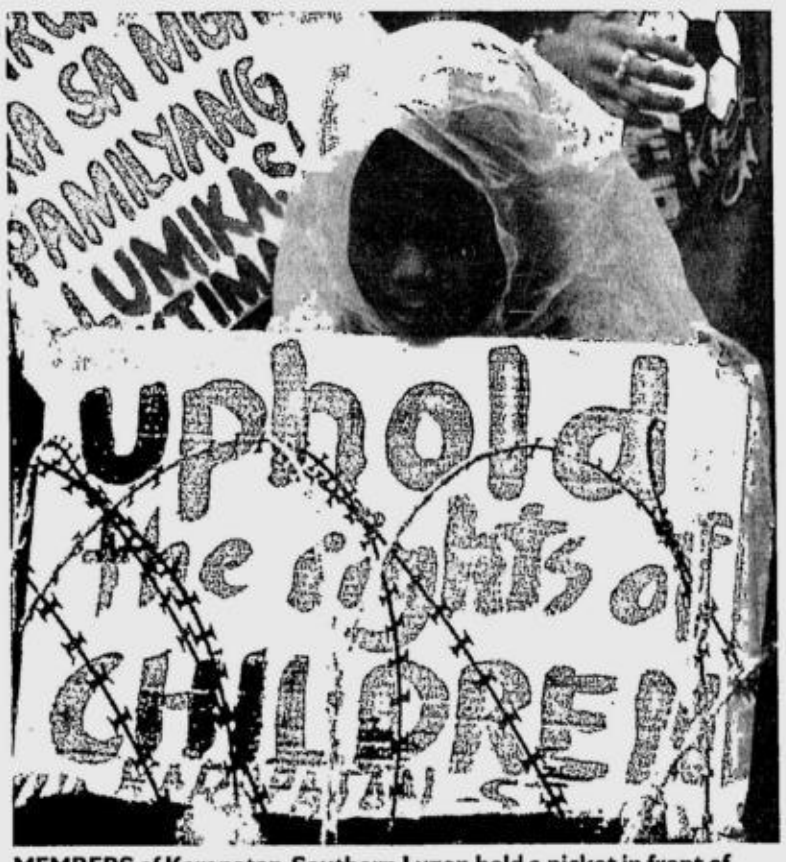
But while there was a drop in the number, Bayan said "the fight for justice is far from over" and called on Ms Arroyo to step down.

In Cebu, protesters asked the Spanish [university] to recall the Champion of Human Rights Medalla de Oro given to Ms Arroyo.

"The award is nothing short of a political statement to honor Ms Arroyo despite her government's notorious human rights track record," said the statement signed by Sanlakas, Kongreso sa Pagkakaisa ng Maralitang Lungsod (KPML)-Cebu, Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP) Visayas and Freedom from Debt Coalition (FDC)-Visayas.

Honorary consul

The statement, which they personally delivered to the residence of Spain's honorary consul in Cebu, Jaime Picornell, said Ms Arroyo did not deserve the award given by the Universidad de Alcala de Henares.



MEMBERS of Karapatan-Southern Luzon hold a picket in front of Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City on Monday to mark Human Rights Day. RYAN LIM

"Therefore, crowning Ms Arroyo as a champion of human rights could only mean that the world opts to look the other way," the groups said.

The National Union of Peoples' Lawyers (NUPL) said that due to Ms Arroyo's alleged failure to uphold human rights, the Philippines was in violation of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The Arroyo administration's refusal to submit the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court to the Senate for ratification was another evidence of its neglect of human rights, according to NUPL secretary general Neri Colmenares.

The Rome Statute, one of the most important treaties after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, mandates the arrest and imprisonment of human rights violators from countries which are "unwilling or unable" to prosecute these violators.

"Philippine membership in the ICC is another legal mechanism against impunity as it provides justice to victims who cannot find justice in their own countries," Colmenares said.

Crosses

Fifty-nine members and leaders of the four groups marched at 11 a.m. from P. del Rosario Street to Camp Sergio Osmeña, the headquarters of the police regional office in Cebu City.

They carried 20 crosses representing the different rights of the people, such as the rights to housing, education, life, water and a free press. From the police headquarters, they went to the house of Picornell to hand him the letter.

Around 150 members of Bayan Muna also marched in Cebu to condemn the giving of the award to Ms Arroyo and to ask the government to stop the extrajudicial killings.

Some 3,600 protesters joined the marches in Iloilo City, Capiz and Aklan to commemorate International Human Rights Day.

In Iloilo City, some 2,500 Bayan-led protesters marched through the city's main streets before holding a rally at the Iloilo Rotary Amphitheater.

They denounced the killing and abduction of activists, including Ma. Luisa Posa-Dominado and Nilo Arado who remain missing after armed men seized them in Barangay Cabanbanan in Oton, Iloilo, on April 12.

Around 10 masked men holding up placards denouncing the militant groups and the New People's Army held a picket on Bonifacio Drive near the venue of Bayan's protest actions.

In Roxas City in Capiz, about 800 protesters joined the rally of Bayan and Gabriela at the Roxas City Bandstand.

In the capital town of Kalibo, Aklan, around 300 people marched in the streets before holding a protest rally at the plaza.

In Bacolod, about 1,200 activists joined a rally at the plaza to protest the extrajudicial killings and abductions.

Karapatan and Bayan leaders also called for the scrapping of the counterinsurgency program known as Oplan Bantay Laya that they said targeted unarmed leftist activists.

About 70 members of FDC-Negros and the Kilusan para sa Pambansang Demokrasya gathered in front of the Fountain of Justice at the Bacolod City Hall to oppose a contract signed by the Central Negros Electric Cooperative (Ceneco) in Bacolod.

The contract calls for the purchase of coal from a power plant in Cebu City.

The Alyansa ng Mga Trabahador sa Slaughterhouse also joined the protest at the Fountain of Justice to oppose the privatization of the slaughterhouse in Bacolod which, the group, said would deprive people of their livelihood.

Blocked

In Manila, protesters gathered in front of the University of Santo Tomas campus on España Avenue at 10 a.m. before they marched toward Plaza Miranda in Quiapo.

The protesters from Bayan, Anakbayan, Karapatan and Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) tried to march toward the Don Chino Roces Bridge (formerly Mendiola) at around 1:30 p.m. but were blocked by truncheon-wielding lawmen at the corner of Morayta Street and Recto Avenue in Sampaloc.

"It was Human Rights Day and we wanted to exercise our rights, but the police did not want to let us march," Reyes said.

Ironic

"It's very ironic," added Willy Marbella, KMP internal deputy secretary general. "Today is supposed to be Human Rights Day. The mere fact that we were prevented from proceeding to Mendiola is a clear violation of our right to express ourselves."

The protesters voluntarily dispersed at around 3 p.m.

With reports from Beverly T. Natividad and AFP in Manila, and Jhunnex Napallacan, Nestor Burgos Jr. and Carla P. Gomez, Inquirer Visayas

President says Ranario case proof of gov't rights policy

From page A1

human rights—from resolving the killings of journalists and political activists to addressing the plight of those who suffered during the regime of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

Ms Arroyo announced that she had certified as urgent the Human Rights Compensation Act, a "critical legislation" that she said "has been pending for years" in Congress and thus was "in itself a travesty of human rights."

The bill seeks to grant financial restitution to the victims of human rights violations under the Marcos regime.

Malacañang issued Ms Arroyo's statement late last night, as she and a small party were en route home after being away since Dec. 1 for official visits to Europe and Kuwait—where she was able to successfully appeal the death penalty on Ranario. *(See story on Page A4.)*

"My successful appeal to the emir of Kuwait to spare the life of Marilou Ranario and convert the death sentence to life imprisonment is yet another example of how my government is dedicated to protecting the rights of our people, whether on Philippine soil or abroad working to give their families a better life," Ms Arroyo said.

She spelled out her administration's priorities in protecting the rights of the people.

"For my government, justice encompasses legal justice, bringing perpetrators to justice and finding restitution for the victims, and also social justice, fighting for equality and a better way of life for all Filipinos from all walks of life," Ms Arroyo said.

She said her administration also continued to address the killings of journalists and activists, saying that its efforts were "bearing fruit" as "both Task Force Usig and human rights groups have reported a significant decrease in cases of such killings this year."

"The PHRC (Philippine Human Rights Commission) has just reported today on the status of 45 criminal cases that are undergoing court proceedings against suspected killers of media and activists," Ms Arroyo said, noting that she welcomed the progress as reflected in the report.

"We are all waiting for court decisions as these are concrete proof of our seriousness to address these killings with the due process of law," she said.

Ms Arroyo said poverty, insurgency and terrorism were the complex root causes preventing the country from fully promoting and fulfilling the rights of its citizens.

"This is why I have made it a priority to address human rights issues directly and indirectly through fighting poverty, rebellions and terrorist groups," she said.

Lawyer rues inaction in 'Abadilla 5' case

From page A1

Lenido Lumanog and Augusto Santos, wrote newly appointed Court of Appeals Presiding Justice Conrado Vasquez to seek his help on the "grave delay" in the resolution of the Abadilla 5 case.

Other members of the Abadilla 5 are Cesar Fortuna, Rameses de Jesus and Joel de Jesus. They are detained at the New Bilibid Prisons in Muntinlupa City.

The five were convicted of killing former Philippine Constabulary Col. Rolando Abadilla in 1996 and were meted out the death penalty.

In 2005, the Supreme Court referred their case to the Court of Appeals for review. Before that, the case was with the high court for five years on automatic review.

The Alex Boncayao Brigade (ABB), an urban communist hit squad, had owned up to the killing and had given the slain officer's wristwatch to Catholic priest Robert Reyes as proof of the group's responsibility. None of the Abadilla 5 belonged to the ABB.

No less than the London-based Amnesty International has also raised serious doubts about the guilt of the Abadilla 5.

Ninth appellate justice

Justice Agustin Dizon, to whom the case is now assigned, is the ninth appellate court justice to handle the review, according to Santos.

Santos said the previous justices to whom the case had been raffled had unloaded the case for one reason or another.

"With this kind of turnover and delays, this case can hardly get started for appellate review, with each successive justice having to start from scratch. On behalf of the Abadilla 5, I pray [that] you do something about this pattern of turnover and delays," he said.

Santos implored Vasquez to give priority to the case and to ensure that the assigned justice would stay on it and hand down a decision in the near future, and would not "inhibit, unload or retire before that happens."

The case was submitted for decision in November 2006.

Santos said it was frustrating that the case would sit with a justice for several months, only for the magistrate to inhibit himself or unload the case.

Influential supporters

The slow grind of the appeal also makes the Abadilla 5 wonder if there are forces deliberately trying to delay the resolution of the issues, Santos noted in his letter.

"Because of this 'merry go-round' as well as previous delays going back to the five years in the Supreme Court, the Abadilla 5 cannot help but think that powerful or influential supporters (Marcos loyalists?) of the Abadilla family are behind this dilatory strategy (not just tactic) to keep the Abadilla 5 down to rot and die in prison," he said.

Kidney transplant patient

Though the case has been in the appellate court for almost three years, the Abadilla 5 have been in jail for more than 11 years and Lumanog has been a kidney transplant patient for more than four years, according to Santos.

He also asked the Court of Appeals to take judicial notice of an Oct. 30, 2007, appellate court decision upholding the double murder conviction of two members of the ABB for the 1995 ambush of businessman Leonardo Ty and his driver, Nestor Encarnacion.

Santos said the decision was important in light of the fact that the Quezon City Regional Trial Court that convicted the five accused had refused to allow the introduction of additional evidence to back up the contention that the ABB was responsible for Abadilla's death.

He said this was shown by the similar pattern in the ABB's ambush of Ty.

Abadilla was shot by four men while sitting in his car that was stalled in traffic, while Ty and his driver were shot by six men while the victims' car was stopped in traffic. Both killings took place in Quezon City.

Molina clinches 3rd gold; RP now 5th overall

From page A1

Coakley, the 6-foot-1 great grandson of the only Filipino double bronze medalist in the Olympics, Teofilo Yldefonso, won in 22.80 seconds, improving on his 23.08 in the morning heats that already surpassed the Olympic qualifying standard of 28.18 and the RP record of 28.13 set by Ronaldo Guiriba in 2005.

In crowning himself as the fastest swimmer in the Games, the 17-year-old Coakley smashed the 22.98 SEAG standard set in 2005 by Arwuut Chain Apasaen of Thailand, who was second this time in 23.19.

The 23-year-old Molina reprised the hat trick he pulled off two years ago by topping the men's 200 breaststroke in 2 minutes 18.11 seconds to become the most successful RP athlete here.

He earlier won the 400 and 200 individual medley.

Arabejo, already the winner of the 200 backstroke Friday, succeeded Miguel Mendoza as 1,500 champ by ruling the event in 15:53.16 as the Filipinos surpassed by two their gold haul of four the last time in Laguna.

Dagmil pulled off a winning jump of 7.87 meters to break his meet and RP mark of 7.81 and clinch a fourth gold for athletics.

Wang prevailed in the men's nanquan 3-events combined and Mariane Mariano emerged sanshou champion in the women's under 60 kg as the only RP winners for wushu.

Two silvers by Jaclyn Pangilinan in the women's 200 breaststroke (2:39.12) and Erica Totten in the 200 freestyle (2:05.75) capped RP feat in the pool.

Boxing gave the Filipinos a chance for an explosive finish as all three female defending champions—light fly Alice Kate Aparri, light bantam Annalisa Cruz and lightweight Mitchel Martinez—gained the finals to boost the number of gold medal hopefuls to 10.

Bantam Junel Cantancio, lightweight Joegen Ladon, light fly Albert Pabila and light heavy Maximino Tabangcora will try to raise the list of finalists to 14 on Tuesday but the expected avalanche of golds could very well turn out to be a disappointing cascade of silvers.

All 10 finalists will be facing Thais in the finals of a sport where the hosts are notorious for biased judging.

The men's golf team, with last-minute addition Anthony Fernando firing a three-under-par 69, grabbed the lead by one over Indonesia, 209-210, after the first round. Purra Cup champion Thailand (214) was a disappointing fourth behind Malaysia (212).

Jonel Ababa and Ferdinand Aunzo shot 70s to back up Fernando, who took the place of the pro-bound Jay Bayron.

Fernando, the reigning national amateur champion, was a stroke behind Indonesian Andik Mauludin in individual play.

Dagmil's victory was only the fourth for the athletics team, which finished with nine the last time, while wushu wound up with just two golds in 14 events after picking up 11 in 2005, when the sport had 22 golds at stake.

Benjie Rivera settled for the silver in the men's 56 kg of sanshou.

The track and field team stands to nail just another gold in the men's 400 meters Tuesday at the end of athletics action after Felicisimo Nierras Jr. clocked the fastest time of 47.15 in the heats. Ernie Candelario also qualified in the finals at 48.37.

Eric Taino joined Cecil Mamiit in the quarterfinals of the men's singles in tennis but will have to raise his game to get past the in-form Danai Udomchoke next.

The mixed doubles teams of Taino and Diane Matias and Mamiit-Denise Dy also won their initial assignments.

After six events, the bowlers continued to lay a big fat egg.

Despite QC plea, 'Boracay' auction on

THE SANDIGANBAYAN SHERIFF yesterday said he would push through with the auction of the "Boracay Mansion" seized from pardoned plunderer and deposed President Joseph Estrada despite the appeal of the Quezon City government to spare the real estate property.

In a two-page letter, Quezon City Treasurer Victor Endriga asked Sheriff Ed Urieta to nullify the levy and exclude the "Boracay Mansion" from auction, noting that it had been registered in the name of the local government since July 4, 2007.

The Quezon City government took over the property following the failure of its registered owner, St. Peter Holdings, to pay P1.7 million in back real estate taxes since 2000.

The property, whose value has been estimated at P142 million, has been stripped of the trappings that once made it a very luxurious residence supposedly for one of Estrada's mistresses.

"We will continue to implement the writ of execution issued by the Sandiganbayan. We will push through with the auction in January unless the local government obtains a temporary restraining order from the court," Urieta told the INQUIRER over the phone yesterday.

Estrada has repeatedly insisted he was not the owner of the property and claimed it was owned by businessman Jaime Dichaves, a co-respondent in his plunder case.

Jocelyn R. Uy

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BIR RELEASES REGULATIONS FOR VAT ON TIMBER PRODUCTS

Timber, whether naturally grown or cultivated, continues to be one of the Philippines' most valuable natural resources. The Bureau of Internal Revenue is therefore working to ensure that the appropriate taxes are paid on the naturally grown or cultivated timber.

Particular attention has been focused on the advance VAT on the transport of timber, which is the subject of the recently-issued Revenue Regulations no. 13-2007. Under the Regulations, owners / sellers of naturally-grown or planted timber products are required to pay an advance VAT on the transport of these products, before they are transported from their place of production or concession.

The Regulations cover those owners / sellers who hold permits or agreements issued by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). Naturally-grown or planted timber products that are harvested from industrial tree plantations are also covered by the Regulations, and are therefore subject to advence VAT payments.

The advance VAT is imposed at the rate of twelve percent (12%) of the value per cubic meter of a particular kind of timber product. The Regulations provides a schedule of values for the various types of timmber products.

Advance VAT payments made may be credited against an owner's / sellers output VAT on the actual gross selling price of the timber products. However, in the case of the advance 3% percentage tax, the advance payment will be credited to the owner's / seller's monthly / quarterly percentage tax return.

The appropriate Forms for the filing and payment of the advance VAT, as well as furher details on the Regulations, may be obtained from the BIR's various Revenue District Offices.

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UN climate summit enters crucial week of negotiations

BALI, INDONESIA—THE UN climate chief yesterday said that cutting carbon-dioxide emissions by up to 40 percent was crucial to reining-in global warming and winning over investors who could provide many of the high-tech solutions needed to ward off catastrophe.

The comments by Yvo de Boer came as the United Nations climate conference on Bali island entered its crucial final week.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, Nobel Peace Prize laureate Al Gore and other prominent figures are to arrive in the coming days to provide momentum toward finalizing a "roadmap" that will eventually lead to a successor accord for the Kyoto Protocol, which expires in 2012.

The draft negotiating text at the Bali talks mentions targets for reducing the amount of pollutants pumped into the atmosphere in a nonbinding way.

Its preamble notes the widely accepted view that industrial nations' emissions should be cut by 25 percent to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2020, and that global emissions need to peak in the next 10 to 15 years and then be dramatically slashed to half of 2000 levels by mid-century.

Test to watch

But most delegates and environmentalists said they expected the numbers to be removed from the final text. The United States and several of its close major allies made it clear Monday they opposed Kyoto-style targets.

"This is the test to watch this week," said Jennifer Morgan, spokesperson for Climate Action Network, which is representing all the environmental groups. "This will show you whether governments are serious or not, whether they support these types of emissions cuts."

De Boer said he could only hope that specific targets would stick.

"It's important to give a clear signal that that's where industrialized countries intend to go," he said, adding that billions of dollars were waiting to be spent on everything from new environment-friendly technology to helping the most vulnerable countries adapt.

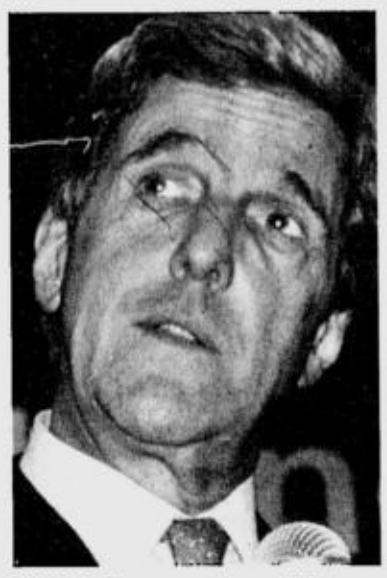
The 1997 Kyoto pact, which was rejected by the United States, commits three dozen industrialized countries to cut their greenhouse gases by relatively modest average of 5 percent below 1990 levels in the next five years.

New deal must go further

Experts say a new deal will have to go farther if the world wants to head off the dire impacts of rising temperatures, from collapsing ice sheets to worsening droughts, flooding and diseases.

The United States on Monday reiterated its position that it was against any language in the Bali mandate that would set emission targets for countries or specify how much global temperatures should be allowed to increase.

US climate negotiator Harlan Watson said there were "many uncertainties" over the numbers and accepting them now would only limit the parameter of future discussions.



KERRY: Democratic candidates back Kyoto Protocol.

"Obviously there will need to be a lot of analysis done over the period of negotiations," Watson said of the range for emission cuts. "To start with a predetermined answer, we don't think is an appropriate thing to do."

US Democrats

Many analysts and observers say, with US presidential elections due late next year, that a new administration might agree to deepening cuts.

"Every single Democratic candidate for president has embraced mandatory caps . . . and expressed their willingness to immediately be part of the Kyoto discussions and try to find a successor agreement to Kyoto," said US Sen. John Kerry, who ran unsuccessfully for president in 2004.

Kerry said later at a meeting with the international delegation that one reason the US Senate never supported the 1997 pact was because it did not cover fast-growing developing countries like China and India.

As a result of Bali, "everybody globally must somehow be part of this solution," said Kerry, who arrived on the resort island on Sunday.

EU pledge

The European Union has pledged to accept binding emissions reductions of 20 percent by 2020.

Nuno Lacasta, climate director of Portugal, which holds the European Union's rotating presidency, said the draft text's mention of 50 percent emissions cuts by 2050 was not out of line.

"What's important is that we are able to have milestones along the way, for which 2020 would be appropriate," Lacasta said.

Environmentalists yesterday said they were satisfied so far with the progress of the talks, but added it was too early to declare them a success.

"We may be getting closer to a decision . . . but we are still far removed from a political deal toward deep cuts in carbon emissions," said Hans Verolme, director of WWF's Global Climate Change Program. *AP*

RP to back 50-percent cut in greenhouse gas emission

THE PHILIPPINES WILL BACK calls for a 50-percent reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by developed countries at the climate change conference in Bali, Indonesia, top government officials said yesterday.

Environment Secretary Lito Atienza and Philippine Mining Development Corp. chair Heherson Alvarez said they would enlist the support of small island-nations in the Asia-Pacific region to persuade developed nations to commit to this goal during negotiations this week.

Atienza and Alvarez, who both chair the Advisory Council on Climate Change Mitigation, Adaptation and Communication, head the Philippine delegation to the UN Framework Conference on Climate Change in Bali.

The two officials pointed out that small island-nations were most vulnerable to global warming, but lacked funding to put up mitigation and adaptation measures.

"We must call on industrialized nations to take a leadership role in Bali to ensure that the world's top 26 developed countries would welcome the 50-percent cut as a giant leap way beyond their 5-percent reduction commitments in the 1998 Kyoto Protocol," Atienza and Alvarez said in a statement.

While industrialized countries are responsible for 70 percent of greenhouse gas emissions, small island-nations and developing countries are expected to bear the brunt of adverse weather conditions caused by global warming.

According to Alvarez, the Philippines is vulnerable to a rise in sea level and climate change, including the impending increase in temperature by 2 degrees Celsius by 2080 if carbon emissions are not controlled.

"Half of our country's 1,610 municipalities are near the coastline. A one-meter increase in sea level could put 64 of our 81 provinces, or 80 percent, in harm's way by submerging 700 million sq. m. of our total land area in water," he said. *TJ Burgonio*

Gore sees growing people power against global warming

From page A1

Gore and Pachauri will travel from Oslo to Bali where governments are meeting to try to launch negotiations toward an environmental treaty to succeed the Kyoto Protocol which expires in 2012.

"It is my great hope that the meeting in Bali will result in a strong mandate empowering the world to move forward quickly to a meaningful treaty," Gore said.

Threat to civilization

Gore, whose Oscar-winning documentary "An Inconvenient Truth" called for immediate action on the environment, pushed for curbs on carbon dioxide, the main greenhouse gas blamed by scientists for global warming.

"The engines of our great global civilization are now pouring 70 million tons of global warming pollution into (the atmosphere) every single day. It is having the consequences long predicted by the scientific community," he said.

"It is now abundantly clear that we cannot continue this process," Gore said.

Pachauri, who was seated next to Gore at Oslo's Nobel Institute under ceilings adorned with white peace doves, also urged world leaders to consider tough steps to tackle global warming.

"If we were to carry out this stringent mitigation, one of the scenarios that we have assessed clearly shows that we have a window of nearly seven years," said Pachauri, an Indian scientist who heads the UN body consisting of around 2,500 climate scientists from more than 130 nations.

"That means by 2015 we will have to see that emissions of greenhouse gases peak no later than that year and start declining thereafter," he added.

"The time for doubting the science is over. What we need now is action."

Gala ceremony

Referring to US civil rights leader Martin Luther King, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964 and said "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere," Gore said: "In the same way, CO2 increases anywhere are a threat to the future of civilization everywhere."

During Monday's gala ceremony at Oslo's City Hall, Gore and Pachauri will accept the Nobel Peace Prize before Norway's royalty, leaders and invited guests.

Gore and Pachauri will arrive at the ceremony directly from an audience at the royal palace with Norway's King Harald V and Queen Sonja.

Before the awarding ceremony, Gore said the prize had already had an impact on efforts to draw the world's attention to the serious and immediate threat posed by global warming.

GORE: From Oslo to Bali

"It is a question of the survival of our civilization," he told reporters.

Governments meeting in Bali have started work on a new international treaty to reduce climate-damaging carbon dioxide emissions. The governments hope to have the new pact, which succeeds the Kyoto accord, in place by 2012.

Gore, however, said the urgency of the problem should prompt governments to aim for an agreement by 2010.

Pachauri said that new data since the last IPCC report had led him to fear that "the future could very well be far more dire than we believe it is today."

Other Nobel awards

The Nobel Prizes, first awarded in 1901, are always presented on Dec. 10, the anniversary of the death of their creator, Swedish industrialist Alfred Nobel.

Each Nobel Prize includes a gold medal, a diploma and a 10-million Swedish kronor (US$1.6-million) cash award.

The other Nobel awards—in medicine, chemistry, physics, literature and economics—will be presented at a separate ceremony in Stockholm, Sweden.

The winners of the Nobels in the sciences will receive their awards on Monday from Sweden's King Carl XVI Gustaf before being treated to a lavish white-tie banquet at City Hall.

The 2007 awards in medicine, chemistry and physics honored breakthroughs in stem cell research on mice, solid-surface chemistry and the discovery of a phenomenon that lets computers and digital music players store reams of data on ever-shrinking hard disks.

Three US economists shared the economics award for their work on how people's knowledge and self-interest affect their behavior in the market or in social situations such as voting and labor negotiations.

One of the economics winners, Leonid Hurwicz, 90, and the literature prize winner, 88-year-old British writer Doris Lessing, could not travel to Stockholm. They will receive their awards at later ceremonies in Minnesota and London, respectively. *Reports from Reuters and AP*

Biofuels gain, but food farms, forests lose

From page A1

ages and runaway climate change.

Jatropha, a wild shrub with oily seeds, is locally called *tuba-tuba*. It is now cultivated in massive scale for biodiesel in several countries, including India, Malawi, Indonesia and Swaziland.

Biodiesel is made from the oil of crops, like jatropha, and other plants, such as soya, palm oil, rape seed and sunflower, mixed with alcohol or used in its pure form.

"I am only using two hectares of my seven-hectare farm for jatropha," Pagculan says, as an experiment. He says the land is rain-fed and has yielded poor harvests due to black bugs in the past years.

"We have an irrigation system, but our farms are only second priority to the banana plantations that grow fruits for export," he says.

Pagculan says he was convinced by the technician sent by the biofuel firm, D One Oil Co., that the switch to jatropha would pay off in Sepaka, once a battleground between the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and government troops.

He will know in a few months if, as the technician says, jatropha will bear fruits within half a year.

If the experimental farm succeeds, he will grow jatropha on most of his seven-hectare property.

Women's loss

For Erlinda Garcia, 49, and several other village women, the rush to plant oil palm or jatropha means losing the patches of cogon grass that they harvest and sell at P17 per sheaf for roofing and the native freshwater snails which abound in ponds now drained for palm oil plantations.

Women used to sell the snails for P5 a liter.

Without rice farms, Garcia and the other women can't be employed anymore as seasonal weeders, gleaners or harvesters.

Without these sources of livelihood, she has to resort to asking for "rejects" at the nearby plant processing banana chips. She recently learned about the technology called odig, meaning "organic, diversified gardening."

"I can plant squash, string beans and other vegetables using organic fertilizers and pesticides," she said.

Biofuels Act

The Philippine Biofuels Act, implemented this year, calls for a mandatory mixing of one-percent biodiesel in petrodiesel and five-percent bioethanol in gasoline.

According to "Up in Smoke," a report on climate change in Asia and the Pacific, this law has "raised fears among some national environmental organizations that the destruction of the country's remaining forests could be accelerated as farmers rush to meet the biofuel demand of one million hectares of jatropha plantations."

The same law also threatens to increase poverty, as the costs of basic commodities are expected to increase as food and fuel crops compete for land and resources.

At least one million hectares of land have been targeted for jatropha plantations.

WOMEN gleaners in Colombio, Sultan Kudarat, get almost nothing after rice crops suffered from a long dry season and an attack by black bugs.
LINA SAGARAL REYES/INQUIRER MINDANAO

Jatropha enthusiasts have been saying that the crop should only be planted in unused, less arable and marginal land.

But in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, tracks of arable land for food crops, like rice, are slowly being used as agro-industrial plantations for biofuels.

The plains of Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao, North Cotabato and South Cotabato are accessible to the P8.5-million pilot processing plant that will be built soon in General Santos City by the Philippine Chamber of Agriculture and Food, with support from the Asian Development Bank.

The international humanitarian organization Oxfam and the environmental group Greenpeace, which published the climate change report, have stressed the need that governments in countries, like the Philippines, promoting the growing of biofuels must have legislation banning the planting of biofuels in lands already used for food crops.

Moratorium

Moreover, the British environmental activist George Monbiot has urged "a five-year moratorium on all government targets and incentives for biofuel."

He is supported by United Nations' special rapporteur Jean Ziegler, who insists that trade should be frozen until second-generation fuels, made from wood or straw or waste, become commercially available.

"Otherwise, the superior purchasing power of drivers in the rich world means that they will snatch food from people's mouths," writes Monbiot.

"If there is one blindingly obvious fact about biofuel, it's that it is not a smallholder crop. It is an internationally traded commodity that travels well and can be stored indefinitely, with no premium for local or organic produce," Monbiot said.

Oil palm grown primarily for its vegetable oil since 1979 in Mindanao is also considered a biofuel alternative, even as the palms, first grown in Africa, are considered by environmentalists most destructive for causing loss of forests in Indonesia and Malaysia.

In Sepaka, oil palm trees are to be planted in about 600 hectares of rented land.

"It is marshy land and the water is often too deep for rice. What they have done is to drain the land, provide drainage canals, which poor farmers cannot afford to make," says Pagculan.

Oil palms, too

The palm oil firm rents the land at P3,500 per hectare a year for 25 years, with a provision for some share in the earnings.

But even unused land has its purpose, scientists say. Monbiot cites a paper published in the Science journal that "suggests that protecting uncultivated land saves, over 30 years, between two and nine times the carbon emissions you might avoid by plowing it and planting biofuels."

Another research group, Monbiot says, has estimated that if the British and European target of a 5-percent contribution from biofuels were to be followed by the rest of the world, the global size of cultivated land would expand by 15 percent. That means the end of most tropical forests. It might also cause runaway climate change.

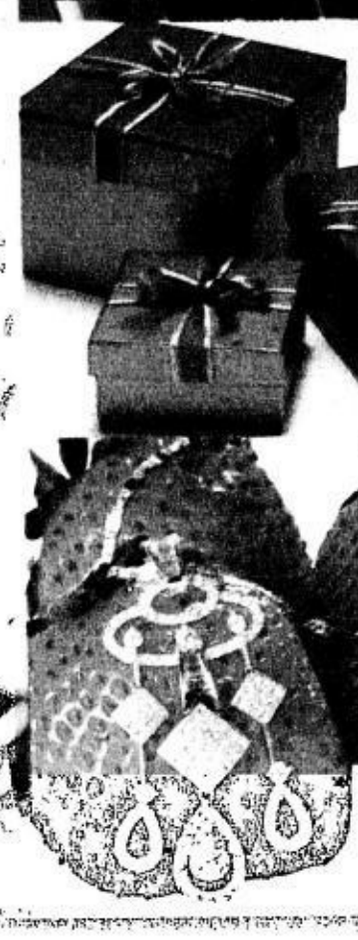
What will the farmers like Pagculan, switching from rice to jatropha, eat in between while waiting for the jatropha shrubs to bear fruit?

"I have the mechanical plow and the thresher which the rest of the community can rent. I will accept payment in kind, like rice," he said.

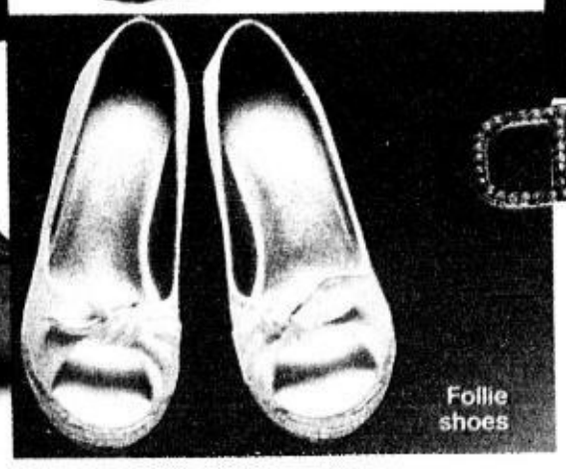
But if his fellow rice farmers will follow their leader's example, Pagculan might find himself renting his plow and rice thresher to no one in his own village. Moreover, hunger might be stalking the jatropha and palm oil farms.

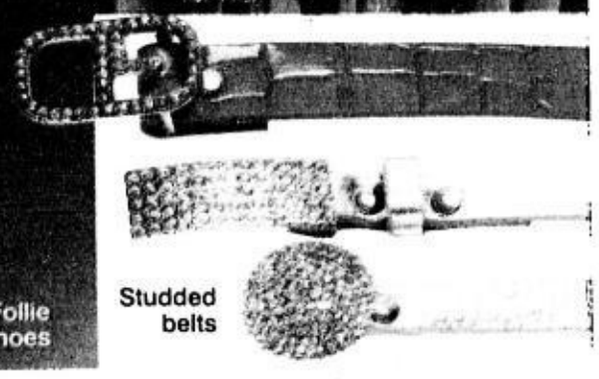
Shinjuku empire dress

jeweled clutch



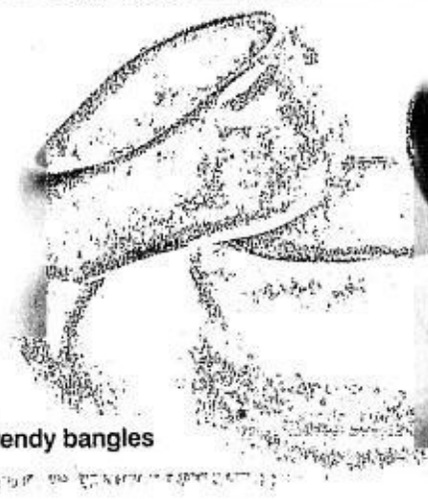
Gift boxes





Studded belts

18k Pendant w/ diamonds 1.70 ct



Trendy bangles

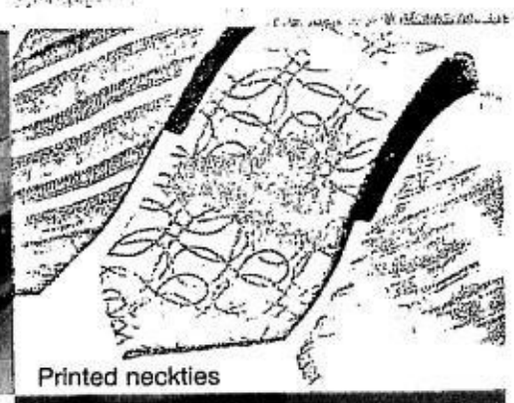
GIFT IDEAS FOR HIM AND HER

Holidays '07

METRO MARKET! MARKET!

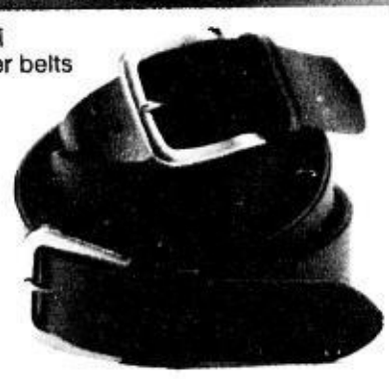
Bonifacio Global City

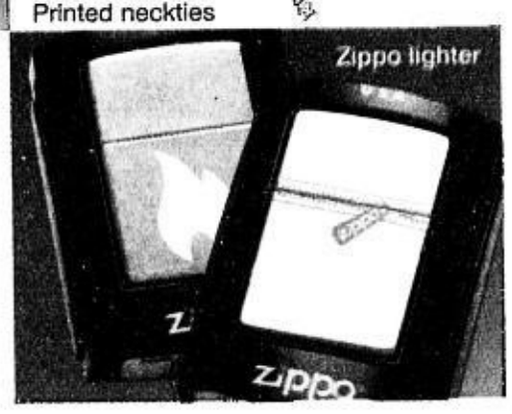
Swiss Military chrono watch

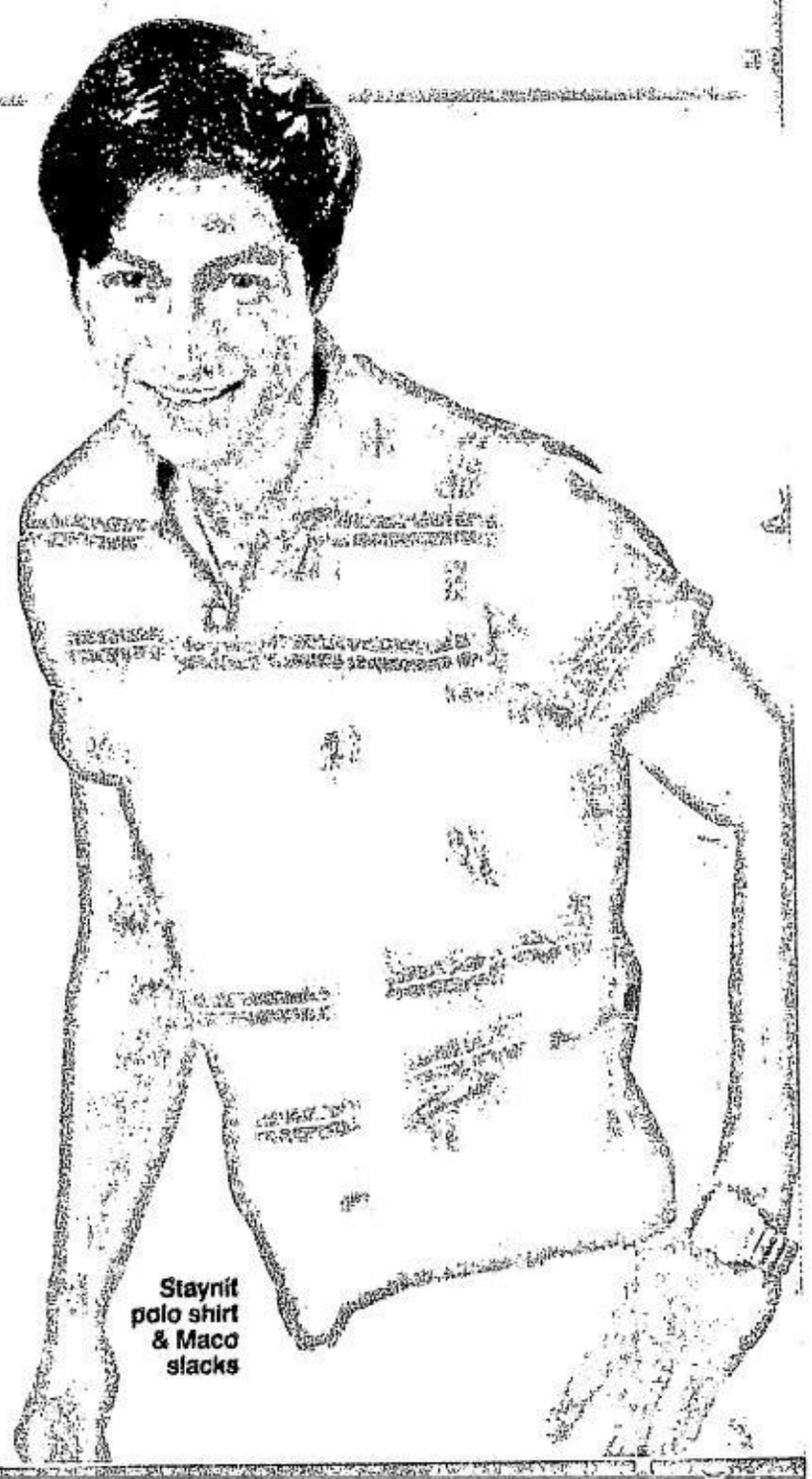


Printed neckties

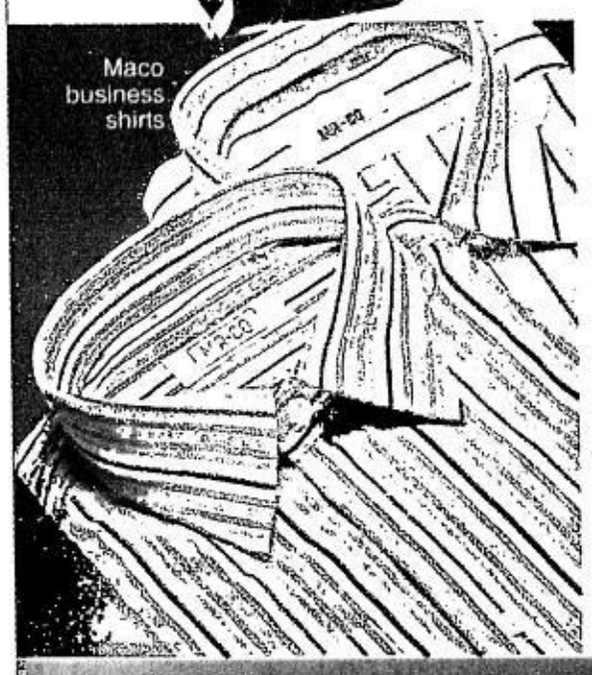
Cellini leather belts





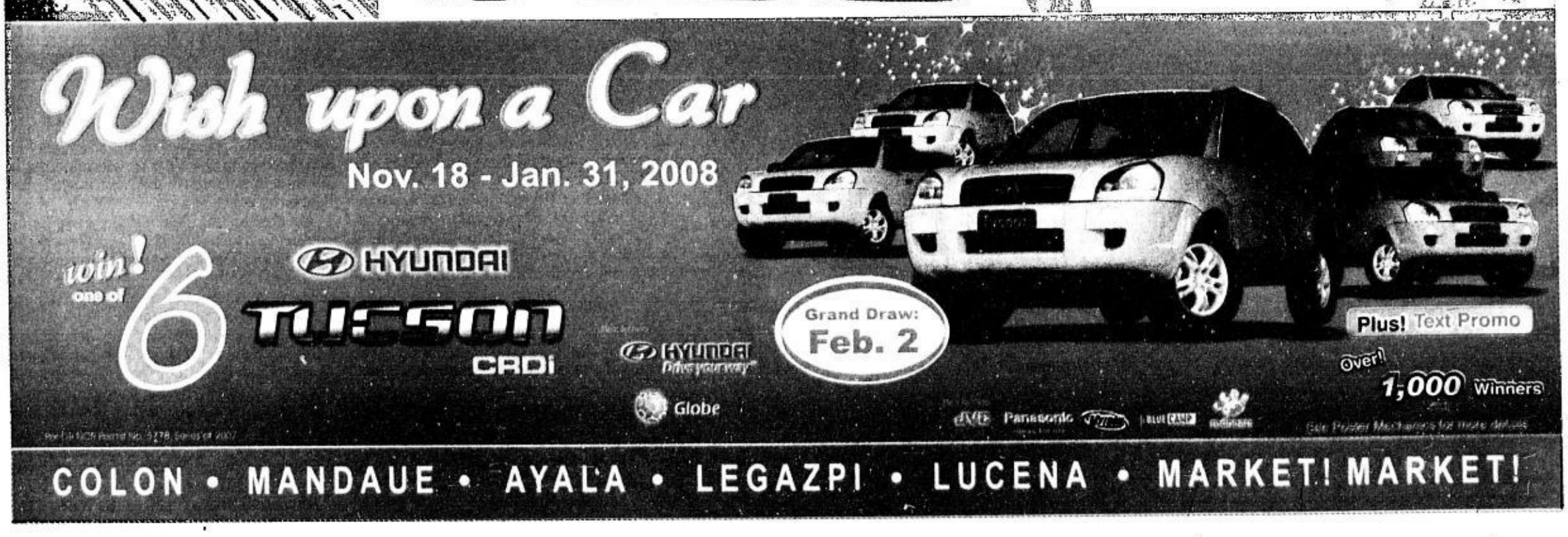


Staynit polo shirt & Maco slacks



Maco business shirts

Fragrances for Him



PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2007

ISSN 0116-2642 INQUIRER Vol. 23 No. 3

Email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph Website: www.inquirer.net/opinion

OPINION

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THE PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, INC. has its business and editorial offices at
•Chino Roces Ave corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City
•P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City
•Our telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments
•Editorial Fax 897-4793 / 897-4794 •Advertising 897-4807
•Circulation 523-5570
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Indecent junket

EDITORIAL

LAST WEEK THREE OPPOSITION REPRESENTATIVES called for an inquiry into what they called "an extravagant junket" undertaken by more than 30 of their colleagues. The big group joined President Macapagal-Arroyo on her trip to France, Spain and the United Kingdom. Party-list Reps. Teodoro Casiño, Crispin Beltran and Liza Masa said, "The unusual size of the House contingent, their questionable role in the trip and the unexplained expenses are too glaring to ignore."

Let us hope that in the rush to adjournment for the Christmas holidays, the resolution calling for an inquiry will not be shelved and forgotten. The people have a right to know what their representatives are doing and how they are spending taxpayers' money.

Unless it can be proven by evidence that the representatives spent their own money, the suspicion remains that government funds were used for their European junket. Representatives are not particularly known to be eager to spend their personal funds. And the distribution of millions of pesos in paper bags to Ms Arroyo's House allies right in Malacañang is too recent to be forgotten. Is the expensive junket not part of the continuing dispensation of largesse to ensure that they will side with her in all her battles to survive and stay in power?

The size of the presidential entourage is indecently big—about 200. An official group on a state or working visit should be as lean as possible—probably a maximum of 25 people. But 200? A group that big cannot but overwhelm even their gracious hosts. No wonder, only the President and her husband were allowed to meet with the Queen of England and the rest were left to cool their heels outside the palace.

The departure of a big group of congressmen at a time when important measures are being discussed in the House is untimely, to say the least. The congressmen are like truant schoolboys who have a lot of schoolwork to do but are playing hooky. Speaker Jose de Venecia has said that he never gave them permission to go abroad while the House is in the midst of debating important measures. The House often encounters a problem mustering a quorum when vital measures are to be discussed, but it seems that it has no problem forming a group when it comes to a foreign junket.

Some representatives have said that they are spending their personal funds in their trip to Europe. That is not the point. The point is that their presence in the three European countries is not absolutely essential. There are executive officials whom they could have delegated to look after their interests in the talks and discussions. There are House committee chairs whom they could have asked to follow up matters that concern their constituents. Delegation of duties to committee chairpersons executive officials would have saved the country millions of dollars in precious foreign exchange.

The European junket group is one of the year's largest presidential delegations to book a chartered flight. The PAL flight had 192 passengers on board, according to the flight manifest obtained by the INQUIRER. It is a record even for the "frequent traveler" President, who, it seems, is in a hurry to amass a lot of travel perks and bonus points before she bows out of office in 2010.

A report posted on gmanews.tv by GMA research shows that about 20 percent of the Office of the President's expenditures in 2006 were "traveling expenses" totaling almost half a billion pesos—to be exact, P482 million. It was more than double the P210 million spent for travel in 2005. Here we have a President spending tens of millions not only on her own travel but also on travel as a form of political patronage while millions of her countrymen wallow in poverty and want.

We agree that travel is broadening, but our representatives should not go gallivanting abroad while there is important work to do, and not at the expense of the taxpayers. And let us not overwhelm our gracious hosts with the size of our visiting delegations. When Prime Minister Lee Kwan Yew of Singapore visited the Philippines in 1992, he came only with his wife, some cabinet members and a few aides and traveled on a commercial flight. No fuss, no frills, no furbelows. That should be the way to go.

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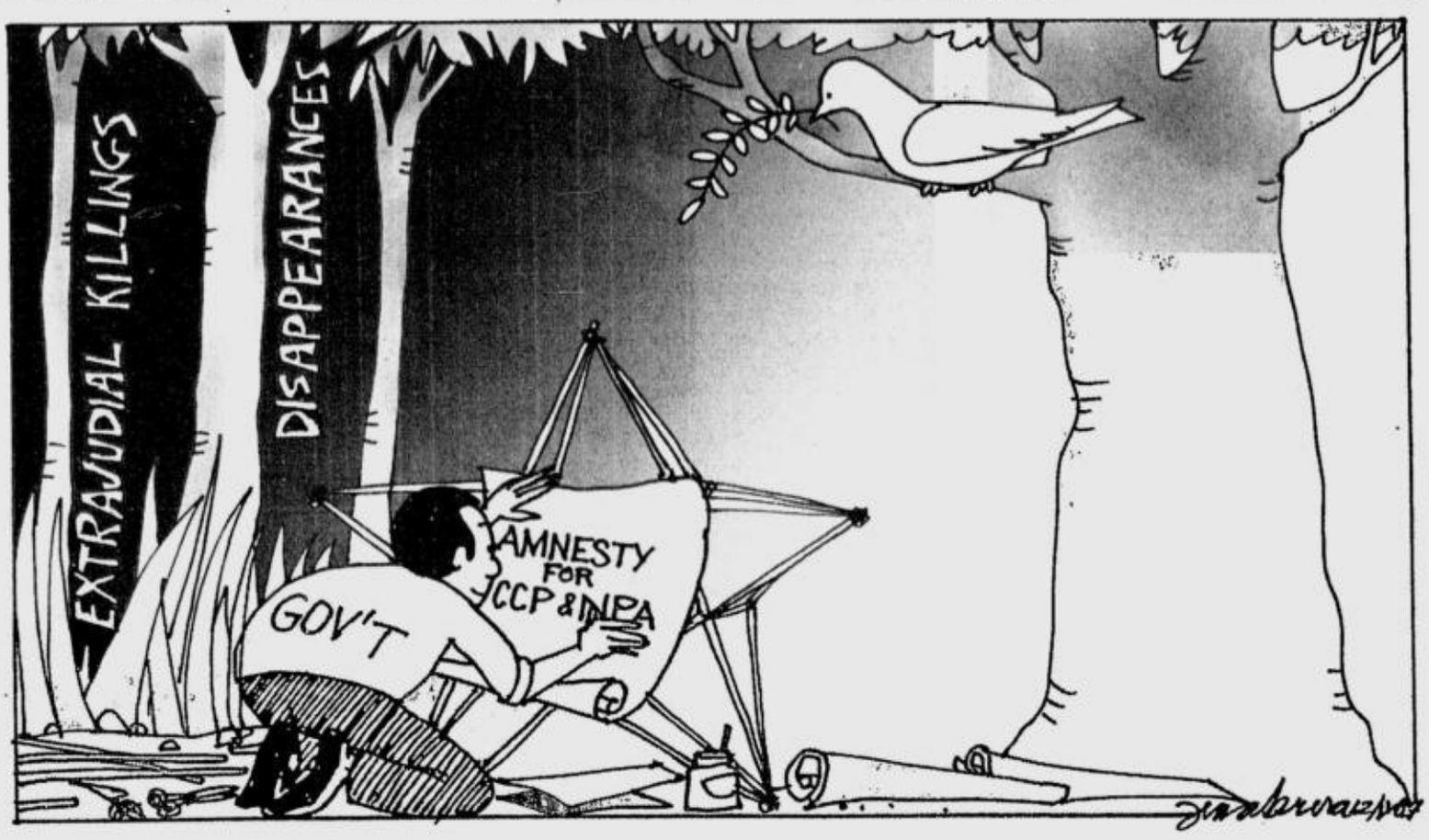

'A nation of highwaymen'

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

"WE CANNOT AFFORD A GOVERNMENT OF thieves unless we can tolerate a nation of highwaymen." The late publisher Joaquin Roces issued that caution, after receiving the Legion of Honor from President Corazon Aquino.

It's been 19 years now since "Chino" spoke as "the Dreamer of Edsa." But the themes he stressed remain relevant. They reverberate in corruption surveys as well as in everyday e-mail.

"We were the victors in the 1986 drama of good versus evil," Roces said. "[But] our people will never forgive us if, in the act of reconciliation, we fail to exact justice...and prove that crime pays."

Today crime pays—handsomely. The P3,233,104,173 stashed in Jose Velarde's account dwindled to only P2,770.69. In reaction, L. Gonzales of San Francisco, CA e-mailed:

"Pardon ... was granted before government seized the money Estrada stole and for which he was found guilty.... Now the money is gone. Estrada's minions must have laughed all the way to the bank. What makes this worse is, there's probably no way to trace where that money went. What now, Madame President?

"Prosecutors believe this pardon was not unconditional, they should have the power to ... put Estrada again in jail where he belonged to begin with. Estrada had to fulfill (conditions) for that pardon... Having stolen one more time, the money he stole before, he is, in effect, in violation of the pardon granted.

"I've heard of strange things happening back home. But nothing beats this for its strange twists. Estrada fooled President Arroyo with her eyes wide open. She looks like a nincompoop to be swindled so easily."

"The thirst for justice was, and remains, the utmost desire of our people," Roces stressed in his 1988 response. "And the most understandable concept of the delivery of justice, in the perception of the Filipino, is one that clearly implements a system of reward and censure."

But in this country "the big thieves hang the little ones," as the Czech proverb says. Thus, Imee and Ferdinand Marcos Jr. scramble to ferret out the dictator's loot secreted by a clutch of highwaymen (a.k.a. cronies), I noted in the column "Dumping tin halos" last Nov. 15. "They've jettisoned their halos."

To steal from a thief is not a crime? Some cronies apparently think so. Former PCCG Commissioner Ruben Carranza believes that he who holds the ladder is as bad as the thief. From New York City, he commented:

"The Marcoses won't settle for ill-gotten wealth they've managed to keep. They now want to get back ill-gotten wealth, taken away from them that has, since then, become someone else's ill-gotten wealth."

They're reclaiming choice real estate, previously surrendered by self-confessed crony J.Y. Campos. They've lodged a claim with the Sandiganbayan for the P1.8-billion Payanig sa Pasig property.

Claimants 1081 groups Marcos victims. It too staked a claim to Payanig. "This is logical. The Marcoses owe the victims $2 billion in damages for the killing, torture, disappearances and abuses inflicted on at least 10,000 Filipinos."

Here, a thief passes for a gentleman once stealing is completed. Shouldn't the Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLC) check the "usual suspect-banks to check as to how the Marcoses finance their own ill-gotten-wealth recovery efforts?" Carranza asks.

"We must place a premium on selflessness versus service to vested interests," Roces said. So, how come the President inaugurated in mid-October the country's "most expensive irrigation project"—the P3.2 billion Bayongan Dam—but by December, the government needed $1-million for "design studies" to improve it?

The dam "would make Bohol one of the top producers of rice in Central Visayas," the President predicted. The Bohol Chronicle earlier documented a 52-percent cost over-run. Filipino and Australian scientists warned of design flaws. As Viewpoint noted earlier, "The dam has been compromised even before the first drop of water sloshed through."

Water has not filled the dam today. But Korea's International Cooperation Agency agreed, with the provincial government and National Irrigation Administration, to provide $1 million to review the brand-new weir. *Onli in da Pilipins*?

Remember 24-year-old Ens. Phillip Andrew A. Pestaño (Ateneo '89 and PMA '93)? In 1995, he was gunned down aboard RPS Bacolod. Within 24 hours, the Navy ruled it a suicide. But a Senate probe, led by the late former Chief Justice Marcelo Fernan, found Pestaño was murdered. The ensign refused to permit illegal logs and 50 sacks of *shabu* packed in flour bags to be loaded. "*Kawawa ang bayan*" was his response to pleas by his parents to heed threats to his life.

If graft takes root in the heart of our Armed Forces, our existence as a nation is threatened, wrote Fr. James Reuter, SJ who tracked the Pestaño case. Badgered by Pestaño's classmates, Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim and Filipinos abroad, the Military Ombudsman and Navy finally moved—after 12 years of paralysis. Its lawyers will defend, not Pestaño, but Lt. Joselito Colico, the officer who admitted to unloading the murder weapon and wiping it.

As Chino Roces put it so well: "If we adopt one standard for the wrongdoer who is poor and without connections, and another for the criminal who is rich and well-connected, then we would be proven liars."

(E-mail: juanlmercado@gmail.com)

Grave concerns

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I WASN'T ALTOGETHER SURPRISED THAT Rene Villanueva's last entry in his blog was a condemnation of Antonio Trillanes' mutiny at the Pen. Villanueva was always a staunch believer in democracy and an even stauncher disbeliever in military rule. I wish however he had lived longer, not just for the obvious reason that he could have regaled this country with more brilliant creations, but so that he could have engaged friends in a spirited discussion of this point.

I'd have done so with him. I'd like to think he considered me friend enough to include among those he might have agreed to disagree with.

As our story last Saturday indicated, though quite literally gasping his last, Rene roused himself from bed to write a scathing denunciation of what Trillanes had done. He said: "Although I'm ill, I've forced myself to get up and blog on Senator Trillanes' selfish attempt to grab power. The poster boy of the opposition has done this before at Oakwood. Why does he like luxury hotels? Of course, he has been charged by government."

He added a piece of advice for those who would follow in Trillanes' footsteps: "We all want the same thing. To my knowledge. it's democracy. How do we attain this? Through the rule of law. We must respect the law at all times. We should not be impatient or be annoyed because the process is slow."

I agree with the general principles, but I would insist that their specific application in this case is a lot more problematic. I've just come from the United Kingdom (my columns last week were written there, including the ones on Trillanes), and I've heard those sentiments echoed by Filipinos, many of them friends. It was raised by several people (a mixture of Filipinos and non-Filipinos) in one forum I spoke in. They didn't particularly like GMA, they said, but surely better to have civilian rule than a military one?

My answer then, as now, is that I'm not so sure that GMA naturally represents civilian rule and the restive sectors of the AFP the military one. At the very least, my impression is that there has been a sea change in the thinking of rebellious military groups since 1986. I have no doubt that had RAM won in the latter half of the 1980s, Gregorio Honasan and company would have held the reins of power. I am not so sure Trillanes and/or Lim would have done the same thing. RAM labored from a praetorian mentality—one that said the military should take over to end corrupt rule—while the "Magdalo" (a loose term for a loose association) labors only from the belief they can midwife a civilian regime that would end corrupt rule. At least, their articulated sentiments proclaim so; whether you believe them or not is another matter entirely.

More importantly, while that may be debatable, another point is far less so. That is the question of whether the GMA government represents civilian rule or not. My contention has always been that it does not, and the real danger is to imagine it does. No wolf has more successfully worn sheep's clothing. That regime is the product of a seizure of power, defended by the military top brass against those sectors within the AFP that have tried to protest it. Lest we forget, all the military officers implicated in the "Hello, Garci" tape ended up controlling the AFP and the PNP. Lest we forget, Brig. Gen. Francisco Gudani and Col. Alexander Balutan wanted to testify in the Senate about poll fraud but were stopped from doing so by the most undemocratic and fascistic means, namely a law that said no public official might speak out against their commander in chief, real or imagined. And lest we forget, under Norberto Gonzales and Hermogenes Esperon, death squads have been free to murder political activists.

None of this is to speak of the very real prospect of GMA doing a Musharraf, or indeed a Marcos, which would finally bring the wolf to shed off its sheep's clothing. I too, like Rene Villanueva, am deathly scared of military rule. That is why I'm more scared of this particular regime than anything else.

As to the rule of law, I'm all for it as well. Whether Trillanes betrayed that or not when he mounted his mutiny at the Pen—indeed whether or not his motives were selfish—I'll set aside for the moment, and leave others to judge. But I do think there is something deeply wrong in loudly condemning Trillanes' apparent flouting of it and GMA's patent violation of it.

The original, and monumental, trashing of the law took place in May 2004 when GMA "helloed" Garci. And I find it the cruelest joke of all that Ronaldo Puno and the two Gonzalezes should now insist that ABS-CBN disclose their tapes, which grossly violates press freedom, while insisting then that the "Hello, Garci" tape be kept under lock and key (after Ignacio Bunye had divulged it), which grossly violated common sense. I find it the cruelest joke of all that the PNP should be free to summon journalists to appear before it to shed light on a presumed coup when the Senate could not be allowed to summon public officials to shed light on an actual one.

You see a country like Britain whose prime minister is fighting for his life because of illegal contributions to his campaign, you know Law rules, the Law that has to do with Justice. Indeed, never mind that law that's written in the statute books, mind only the law that's written in the heart. You see a country like Japan whose officials resign outright because the slightest scandal attaches to their persons, you know Law reigns, the Law that has to do with Honor.

It's all very well not to be impatient because the process is slow. But what if the process is completely blocked? What if patience becomes indistinguishable from inaction and becomes the very ground upon which injustice thrives?

What if the Rule of Law is the Rule of the Few?

Anti-hazing congress at NCPAG today

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

A SIGNIFICANT, IF STARTLING, OFFSHOOT OF the Trillanes caper is that the media now find themselves in the midst of a healthy debate about press freedom, its scope and limitations or lack of them. It's interesting that perhaps for the first time, media practitioners are openly debating these points among themselves. Some have criticized some media moguls' handling of the Peninsula Manila coverage, even as the latter fiercely defended their right to determine their own conduct in a crisis. At the very least, the debate is raising the need for a return to sanity and a fervent self-examination of media's motives and avowals regarding press freedom.

* * *

Some media moguls have justified their decision to stay in the midst of the crisis by saying "the public has a right to know. We calculated the risks, took precautions for our team and made the choice (to stay)." Sen. Joker Arroyo, however, put it for many citizens when he said that "media clearly erred" in that decision. Arroyo, who made it his business to defend media in the martial law days, said one thing is clear in a crisis situation: "Once the order is given that the police or military can move, only the ground commander will make the decisions and nobody interferes with that." To which some media countered that this would curtail freedom of expression and constitutes prior restraint. In the aftermath of the Pen caper, some media questioned whether their colleagues' decision to stay arose from a zeal to inform, or whether it was only to protect rebel personalities they were "enamored with" or to protect media's awesome power, which makes politicians quake in their boots.

Standard columnist Bong Austero quotes a foreigner friend as opining, "Affairs in (the Philippines) are really controlled and directed by media. Many media people act like celebrities and get confused on the reasons behind their popularity, and grossly ignorant about their responsibilities." Austero said that after the Pen episode, he tends to agree. I don't just agree, I am saddened at the arrogance of some of our media colleagues, and fear that hubris is **what would discredit the Fourth Estate.**

* * *

Another recent welcome news was that the Alpha Phi Omega (APO) fraternity is converting dreaded initiation rites into tools of nation-building and development. For decades, many fraternity rituals smacked of sadism and violence, which led to grave physical harm to neophytes and even deaths. In fact, there's suspicion that many more episodes of violence in campuses are never reported. The APO now makes its neophytes build houses in a Gawad Kalinga village in a remote province as part of 40 hours of community work.

"No to Hazing" has also led former Sen. Joey Lina, author of the Anti-Hazing Law in Congress, to convene, at the suggestion of Cecile Alvarez and myself when he appeared on our dzRH program, the National Congress to Stop Hazing today from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the UP National College of Public Administration and Governance in Diliman, Quezon City. It is a project of a newly organized NGO called Solidarity for Anti-Hazing via Education (SAVE), led by Lina, in cooperation with the NCPAG Alumni Association led by Quezon City Vice Mayor Herbert Bautista. The congress is timed with the observance of Araw ng Kabataan, since hazing has victimized the country's youth.

* * *

Participating in the congress will be school administrators from institutions that have seen a lot of hazing, leaders of youth organizations that have pledged to reject violence on campus, educators, psychologists and sociologists who will analyze the hazing psyche, police/military representatives and law enforcers, and other stakeholders. With the death this year of NCPAG student Chris Mendez and the appalling lack of progress in prosecuting the case owing to very influential lawyers for the Sigma Rho defendants, SAVE hopes to come up with creative suggestions on how initiations can be turned into tools for meaningful national development, instead of abusing, maiming or killing the youth. One of the goals of the convenors is to appeal to President Macapagal-Arroyo to declare June as Anti-Hazing Month as a timely reminder for thousands of youths going to school. Another is to seek amendments to the Anti-Hazing Law (which Lina says was significantly watered down in the conference committee), so that fraternity elders are held directly responsible for the conduct of initiations.

* * *

Last Dec. 4, hundreds who packed the PICC Plenary Hall surrendered to the incredible magic of "Adeste Fideles 2007." The Christmas concert featured best-loved Christmas carols sung by leading tenors and sopranos and proved to be a welcome balm for the soul, after the tensions of the Pen takeover and earlier fears of a supertyphoon. Eddie Yap, who painstakingly organized Adeste 2006 and 2007 under the sponsorship of Credit Suisse, was especially happy over the show's "ecumenism." For instance, he noted that the Vienna-based Muslim tenor Abdul Candao, who was flown here for the occasion, sang "Panis Angelicus," which glorifies the transformation of simple wheat into the "bread of angels" during the most solemn part of the Catholic Mass, while Buddhist-oriented singer Elaine Lee sang "Ave Maria" to the Virgin and Jennifer Uy and the Chiang Kai Shek College Youth Choir reveled in Christian Christmas traditions. I loved soprano Rachelle Gerodias' rendition of "Light of a Million Mornings" and the duet of soprano Karla Gutierrez, president of the Philippine Opera Company, and pop singer Vina Morales in "Payapang Daigdig" by Felipe de Leon. Orchids, too, to set designer Agnes Suarez and lighting designer Butch Cruz, for the beautiful stage that recreated a cathedral-like ambiance. We eagerly look forward to Adeste 2008.

Love and law

YOUNG BLOOD

Pennylane

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.**

"I AM GOING TO BE A LAWYER, AND I WON'T LET ANYthing get in my way."

Those were my words when I was about to enter law school. I was so determined to succeed in my law studies. In fact, law school, codal provisions, cases, recitations, and exams were the only things that I thought about during my first two months in class.

Many of my block mates who entered law school with a boyfriend or girlfriend ended up splitting with their special someone after two or three months. This made me realize more that love and law school really do not mix. I had no problem with that. I was not looking for a boyfriend, and I definitely was not looking for love in law school. Love and boys were not even on my list of priorities.

Then something happened. I don't know how, but it happened. Some time in August I realized that I had become human again.

We were seat mates. We used to eat lunch together. We joked around when we were not busy with school work. And he would often drop me off at my apartment on his way home.

We were friends, purely friends. He was just like any other guy friend I had. The only difference was that, we saw each other every day because we belonged to the same block in school.

One day, I dreamed of him. Maybe that was because we were always together. I told him about it in a text message. We started to "flirt" with each other—in jest. Then one thing led to another. We were happy (or was I the only one feeling this?).

But there was one problem. He had a girlfriend, a girlfriend whom he truly and dearly loved. Believe it or not, he loved her. I could feel it.

Fact No. 1: She was his priority. Fact No. 2: I loved him. So, I accepted Fact No. 1 because of Fact No. 2. I was sharing time with his girl. Of course, I had his "left-over time," those times when he was not needed by his girl. But I did not want to think of myself as just an option for him. I wanted to believe that he cared or maybe even loved me.

Months passed, and problems started to arise. There were lots of school work to do. We had to study for the exams, and had to do so many case digests. He thought I was becoming demanding.

I knew from the start that I had no "right" over him since I was not his girlfriend. But because of this same fact, I felt insecure. So I asserted my non-existent rights. I became clingy, demanding and possessive.

I got into his nerves. He told me we ought to know where we stood in relation to other people. And he reminded me that I knew from the start that he was committed.

We had our bad times, but still continued with whatever it was that we had. Then he told me the news that they had broken up. He was devastated, but he told me that he wanted us to still be okay with each other.

But after saying that, he started to ignore me. Neither would he answer my calls nor reply to my text messages. It was as if I was suddenly non-existent to him.

I came back to my senses. And the truth hit me badly. How blind and stupid can a law student get? How could I not have realized from the beginning that he really did not care that much for me (that is, if he ever cared at all)? Memories of us together, both good and bad, came back to me. I should have known where I stood when one time he suddenly left me after his girlfriend called. He left without even telling me that he was leaving. I went to the parking lot, and his car was gone. He brought with him all my things, without worrying how I'd get home. So much for caring.

It is a cliché, but truth really hurts. It hurts to know that the person whom you truly love and care for did not, cannot and will not even care for you. I am still hurting. And I do not know if this hurt is going to leave me at all.

In law, when a person suffers an injury, he or she is entitled to relief by filing a case for damages. If denied by a lower court, he or she can file a motion for reconsideration, appeal to the appellate court, or even elevate the case to the Supreme Court.

But in my case, I am not entitled to any relief. Why? Reason No. 1: Law is different from love. Law and love are governed by different rules. But assuming that the rules applied to law is applicable to love, I am still not entitled to relief because of Reason No. 2: I have unclean hands. There is a rule in law that no relief or remedy is available from the courts for a person with unclean hands (except in exceptional cases, which I am certain does not include love). I knew from the start that he had a girlfriend. I was in conspiracy with him when he cheated on his girl, or at the very least I was an accomplice to the crime (cheating). Because of this, I am now left with no relief for my injured heart.

I cannot appeal to him and beg him to love me. My only hope lies in making an appeal to heaven. I have already filed one, but my appeal is still pending. With my patron saint, St. Jude (the saint for hopeless cases), hopefully as my counsel, I hope and pray that the Supreme Judge will grant it.

But right now, I've got to get myself together and prepare for the lessons ahead. I'll just have to wait for the decision on my case. I love him so. I pray that the decision favors me.

Pennylane, 23, is a student in a prestigious law school in Metro Manila.

The curfew state

COMMENTARY

Florin T. Hilbay

WITH THE ARROYO ADMINISTRATION'S FORay into a regime of curfews, the Philippines backtracks—yet again—from constitutionalism and moves even closer to de facto authoritarianism. Whereas the President's previous proclamations of a state of emergency at least relied on the superficial justification that they were simply "declarations" of the state of events (even if, in fact, people were arrested, media outfits were threatened, and one newspaper was actually raided), her imposition of a region-wide curfew is per se a violation of the Constitution.

Art. III, Sec. 6 of the Constitution provides that "the right to travel [shall not] be impaired except in the interest of national security, public safety, or public health, as may be provided by law." The Constitution has clearly allocated to Congress the power to restrain the liberty of movement. In going solo, the President bypassed a coordinate department which, under our constitutional order, has authority to ascertain when, where, how and why limitations may be placed on the right of citizens to travel.

Beyond the lack of authority, the imposition of curfew inflicts tremendous damage on fundamental mechanisms essential to constitutional governance:

First, curfews effectively detain citizens under house arrest. In the name of what National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales refers to as "police power" (which by the way is legislative in character), we are herded by fiat into our homes under penalty of detention. Ultimately, curfews are a system where citizens are reduced to choosing which cell they want during the period of restraint—theirs or the government's. From midnight to daybreak, public streets are the restricted province of law enforcers checking for telltale signs of whatever they want to find, armed with license to search and seize anyone. Welcome to the police state.

Second, this form of embargo violates the due process rights of citizens. If the right to travel means anything, it is that the government is barred from picking and choosing who may roam the streets. Along with checkpoints, curfews flip the presumption of innocence by making those not on the list of exceptions immediately subject to arrest. According to the guidelines, "the conduct of searches, seizures, and arrests in checkpoints shall be done with civility and courtesy with due respect to innocent passersby, commuters, or bystanders." The operative term here is innocent, for the guilty is not someone who has committed any crime under the law but anyone who doesn't have a legitimate excuse—as defined by the government—to be on the streets. Ordinarily, checkpoints along designated public roads are set up to catch known fugitives from justice. In such instances, law enforcement officers are guided by clear objectives that have minimal impact on the traveling public. But region-wide curfews and checkpoints are entirely different because the harm to liberty is both broad and deep, and the aim of maintaining "order" so vague as to give the police dangerously wide discretion to harass the public.

From a default rule where it is the government that has to justify any interference with liberty, we have moved to one where we are made to justify the exercise of our rights. This altered constitutional existence is several steps backwards from what we can demand by right: that the police overcome the burden of explaining why any particular restraint needs to be employed in the first place, that is, that the law enforcers have "probable cause" to restrain and detain. Today, the citizen's failure to explain her use of the streets results in immediate incarceration.

Thirdly, excepting only "legitimate media people" from curfews violates the freedom of the press. Give the government the right to choose who among the media are legitimate and the only media you will get will be the mouthpieces of the government. The arrests of journalists covering the takeover of the Manila Pen are a glaring attestation. Restraints upon the press are particularly constitutionally noxious precisely because those in power suffer from a conflict of interest: the censor's desire to avoid criticism by those being censored. The hallmark of a repressive government is its remarkable ability to control the pipelines of information, and the right to classify journalists and direct their movements are classic examples of prior restraint.

Some might dismiss this one-time curfew as pardonable overkill undeserving of worry. But then again, this is exactly the problem with those governmental actions that are "capable of repetition, yet evading review." By now we should realize that the line separating what we can and cannot do are consistently being redrawn against our will and favor. To let the President conscript public space today is to allow her to expand her prerogatives tomorrow. Who knows what dangers might be imagined by an administration surviving on a daily basis while it rides high on the rhetoric of a strong republic?

That the President has the authority to arrest a band of fugitives who have a penchant for hotel comforts is a given, but her authority to arrest those who escape detention or inflict damage to private property should not be confused with her minions' desire to inflict "peace and safety" on the citizenry by unconstitutional means. We should not let her wage a battle for political survival at the expense of our constitutional rights.

Florin T. Hilbay is vice chair of Bantay Katarungan and an assistant professor at the University of the Philippines College of Law.

SM Nation

NEWSSTAND

John Nery

I TOOK PART IN THE 1st BUSINESS EDUCATION -Industry Summit last week, a dialogue hosted by the Philippine Council of Deans and Educators in Business. PCDEB is an extraordinarily active consortium, achieving in six years (three awards competitions, a complete accreditation process, regular study tours, and so on) what other professional associations take decades to do. My role was simple enough: to give a journalist's perspective on business education, which is currently in the throes of modernization.

* * *

Randy David has written often on what he has called "the sources of the modern impulse." His column the other day was an elegant meditation—indeed, more variation than precis—on the substantive speech he read at the third INQUIRER Briefing the other week. In that forum, which I had the privilege of moderating, Randy spoke hopefully of a Philippines in transition.

"OFWs, malls and cell phones—they represent the faces of our modern economic condition, a snapshot of where we are today as an economy. Together with the mass media, they constitute the most powerful driving forces of the Filipino transition to modernity."

* * *

At the education summit, held at the Asian Institute of Management, I acknowledged the breakthrough importance of the Commission on Higher Education's Memo Order No. 39, which standardizes the BS in Business Administration program nationwide. But I suggested that the world it assumed was skewed. Excerpts:

"The late Roger Silverstone, the pioneering media theorist, once described media as 'the texture of our experience.' Indeed, in all but the remotest locations, we can almost say that human existence seems to be predicated on access to media: think of the ubiquitous cell phone, or the universal television set, or the various forms in which music makes its omnipresence felt.

"But even these—cellphone, TV, radio or MP3—can be said to be old media.

"The World Wide Web dazzles us with possibility, with its social networks and virtual worlds, its million books and unexpected discoveries. Any parent who has ever spent time in the Neopets universe or seen a teenager absorbed in Facebook knows what I mean.

"But even the Web fails to catch, with its gossamer net, the true meaning of media as 'texture.'

"Once, in Bangkok, at a meeting of the World Association of Newspapers, I heard a presenter say the most extraordinary thing: Supermarkets, he said, are the new media. That would make Wal-Mart the world's biggest media company—and bring us closer to Silverstone's central insight.

"Of course, the presenter was straining at hyperbole to make a point. But he was also being quite literal. Enter a good-sized supermarket now, in any of the country's bigger cities, and you find yourself in an immediate, even tactile, media environment. Brand names are talking to you; interactive advertising-on-an-endless-loop is waiting for you in the next aisle; moving displays startle you. It isn't the futuristic world of Steven Spielberg's 'Minority Report' yet, but does anyone doubt that, for the great majority, this is indeed the shape the future will take?

"Perhaps, if that presenter in Bangkok had spent any time in the Philippines, he would have said: Malls are the new media. Indeed, in the Philippines, we can almost say that the country's malls form a parallel republic. We shouldn't underestimate the possibilities that arise when a poor boy from Lubao, Pampanga, (and I mean a real poor boy, not the President's late father) enters SM San Fernando and finds the exact same environment as would a yuppie shopping in SM Makati. In other words, teenagers in any of the areas with an SM mall can say, 'Let's watch a movie in SM,' and, even though they are hundreds of kilometers apart, visualize the exact same cinema: the same stars on the ceiling, the same popcorn stand, the same seating. Welcome to SM Nation.

"Because 'media is texture,' what prevents the SM Group from venturing into news media, too? What prevents PLDT, with its MyTV breakthrough, from assuming the functions of a news network? What prevents San Miguel from producing the news, not merely subsidizing it?

"Too many questions; not enough answers, at least not yet. But this is the world we live in; this is what the world is coming to. As broadly defined, media has become more and more the texture, even the very condition, of our experience. Does the new BSBA program prepare its students for this reality?"

* * *

Having spent the last several months re-reading Rizal, I thought it a good idea to end my remarks, at a forum dedicated to "Developing the Global Filipino," with a word about the country's most famous globetrotter. I offered three quick notes from Rizal's own experience, including this riff on his avid use of all available media:

"The Global Filipino needs to develop a sense of practical commitment. This sense is obvious in those scolding letters Rizal wrote, when he complained about his fellow Filipinos wasting their time on gambling and women (and not necessarily in that order). But it is also there in his intuitive grasp of the different opportunities of 19th century media: in his readiness to write for a newspaper, but also in his decision to compose the 'Noli' in Spanish, not French; his appropriation of a 250-year-old history book as a teaching moment; his realization, after watching American Indians from the Wild, Wild West perform thrilling acts during the Paris Exposition of 1889, that a similar group he would call Los Indios Bravos could also be potent propaganda."

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NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

THEY SAID

Farmers are right

"In all the [land reform] cases that I have read, this is the only case where I am certain that the farmers are right."

—Former Agrarian Reform Secretary Florencio Abad on the Sumilao case

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Bishops misjudge us

LETTERS PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

"WHILE THE CALL IS GOSPEL-inspired, it is not morally wise; it sounds like a sly condonation of plunder. It seems to tell plunderers that it's all right to steal from the public coffers and amass ill-gotten wealth so long as they give part of it later to the poor. Any rogue or thief might romanticize his plunder by doing a Robin Hood—or a Zacchaeus." This is an excerpt from the INQUIRER's Nov. 27 editorial titled "Stasis."

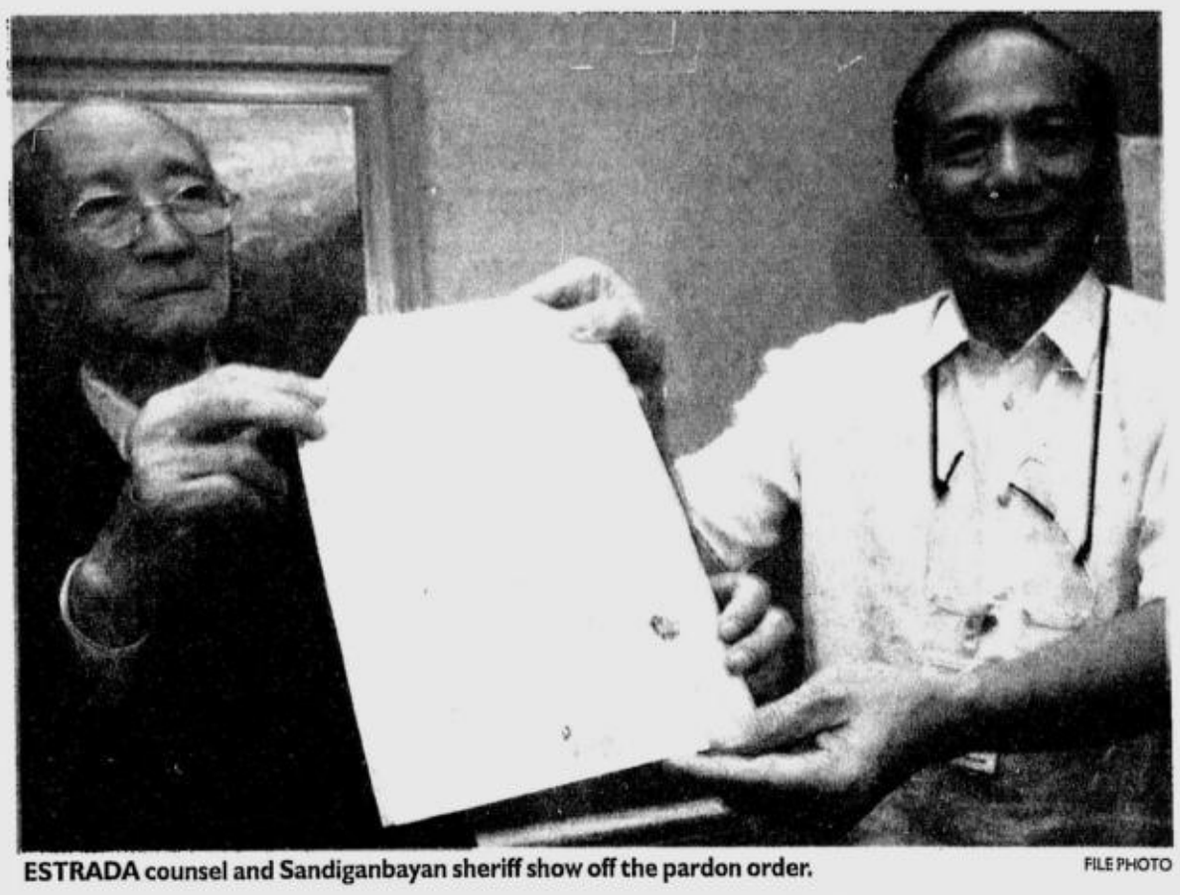
I believe that the INQUIRER has done this country a great service in its criticism of the Church. I can feel the pain in the editorial writer's choice of words, and I detect an undercurrent of resentment toward the Catholic leaders. Yes, their conservatism in the face of obvious criminality from our leadership is shocking to me as a Catholic. Of course, I have read about Church hypocrisies from European and South American writers. I am also well aware of stories of other Church corruption that I need not specify right now.

What amazes me, however, about the Church's attitude toward the current regime is how indefensible it is. Its tolerance confounds me. Do they wish God gave them another dead Ninoy Aquino? If they are praying for this sort of clarity, someone should tell them that this regime has given us enough Ninoys. They are not rich or famous Ninoys, but they are in God's eyes of equal significance.

Something is clouding the judgment of the bishops. They may have faith in God and they may love God, but they are forgetting Jesus' other great commandment: to love their fellowmen. Perhaps the bishops should have faith in the Filipino people. Perhaps they are thinking of worse alternatives to this regime. Perhaps they think that to remove the current regime is to invite more evil, the evil of chaos and anarchy, perhaps? Please, Filipinos are not savages.

To free them from the moral depravity of their current leaders will not lead to chaos. The bishops should have faith in the inherent goodness of the Filipino. And because democracy is the rule of the people, won't a real democracy mean the rule of goodness?

—BRIAN BROTARLO, brian.brotarlo@lycos.com



ESTRADA counsel and Sandiganbayan sheriff show off the pardon order. FILE PHOTO

Estrada pardon cries out for review of clemency process

ALTHOUGH THE GENERAL PUBLIC received the executive clemency granted to former President Joseph Estrada with mixed reactions, I think the majority of inmates accepted and even welcomed it. Many concede that as a former president, he should be given such a pardon.

However, whether we like it or not, the Estrada pardon brought into focus the process of granting executive clemency. Ordinarily, it takes years for a petition for executive clemency to be processed and even considered. There are several documents and steps, such as the Certificate of Non-Pending Cases, NBI Record Check, Psychological Test, Community Interview or Background and Pre-Executive Clemency Investigation and interview of the applicant, that must be submitted or taken before a petition is even scheduled in the agenda of a meeting of the Board of Pardons and Parole (BOPP).

The presidential prerogative given under the Constitution cannot be questioned. However, given the speed with which Erap was given executive clemency, the process of granting executive clemency should be reviewed for the purpose of making it more efficient.

Former Justice Secretary Hernando Perez, in one interview, said that the Philippine system for rehabilitating prisoners has been found to be successful. Therefore, those who have shown signs of successful rehabilitation should be granted executive clemency expeditiously. If not, then the efforts of the Bureau of Corrections and the Board of Pardons and Parole, Parole and Probation Administration and other related agencies are for naught.

We hope that President Macapagal-Arroyo calls for a review of the process of granting executive clemency.

—RONALD J. DE VERA, Pluma, Dorm 9-A, BOC, Muntinlupa City 1776

A new model for business people

I FOUND THE STORY "SALAY PAper founder works hard to push for fair trade" (INQUIRER, 11/25/07) very refreshing and inspiring.

Businesswoman Loreta Rafisura and her family personify the true model for all present and would-be businessmen (or women) in our country. She really has lived up to her patriotism, concern for the environment and Christian upbringing, "exemplifying that Filipino concept of bayanihan" by helping her poor constituents in Salay, Misamis Oriental, taking care of the environment (recycling of paper), and practicing and nurturing the values of fair trade in the many years she has been in business.

I hope many people, especially our top government officials, read her story, especially about how she managed to persevere and succeed in her endeavor. While she was slowly becoming a success in the paper industry, she also helped her people in Salay by providing jobs and livelihood for their families. (A stark contrast to most of our famous and wealthy businessmen who managed to get to the top by stepping on other people's toes.)

Our growth as a nation can start with people like the Rafisura family. If our government will sincerely help and support them, slowly but surely our local industries will develop, inspiring most of our countrymen to help in rebuilding our country and to truly move on to a better life.

But for as long as our high officials are preoccupied with political bickering, stealing money from the people, silencing government critics and manipulating justice for their own selfish ends, we will never know what the good life is. The high economic growth trumpeted by our national leaders will remain just a pipe dream.

—EDWARD FELIX M. DONATO, edwardfelixdonato @yahoo.com.ph

Media hypocrites' star treatment

JOURNALISTS ARE QUICK TO criticize our politicians for acting above the law. An example would be politicians breezing through airport security checks, and justifying their action by telling the world that, as political leaders, they have no interest in bombing a plane and their jobs are of utmost importance.

The same excuse is now being used by the reporters who were detained after the "rebellion" in the Peninsula Manila Hotel. What hypocrisy and arrogance! These media people ought to be ashamed of themselves.

Should the police risk the possibility of some mutineers escaping with media IDs (which can be faked) for cover or while disguised as journalists? Should media people be released because the public recognize their faces? But who is to determine that?

The reason we have standard operating procedures is to minimize arbitrary human decisions. A police officer that is asked to identify and release recognizable faces (as he sees fit) has enormous power and authority that no person should have. The identities of the journalists needed to be verified, and on this score it was right that they were treated like any ordinary Filipino citizen.

Journalists make me sick. Rather than serving as a force for change, for establishing a society where all are equal before the law, they want their own pie of perks and privileges—and special treatment. Like our politicians, they want to be above the law, with one set of laws for them and another for ordinary Filipinos.

—MARK BELO, 36 Bonifacio St., Ayala Heights, Diliman, QC

Nothing wrong with 'alterations'

PLEASE ALLOW ME TO EXPRESS my opinion on the controversy over the "alterations" done on the mural now adorning the National Press Club (NPC) restaurant.

Out of curiosity and to cherish my fond memories of the press club I, as a young boy, visited many times with my father (who was then in Philippine journalism), I went to see the work of art for myself.

I did notice the faces of Amando Doronila and a host of other contemporary journalists, but I find no controversy in the "alteration." In all honesty, I thank God that the NPC has been refurbished, with the elevator completely running, unlike in my previous visits to the place (which figured prominently in my years as a young man and where I shook hands with my father's colleagues who were considered titans in Philippine journalism).

The protest of the Angono artists, to my legal mind, has absolutely no legal basis. The artists were contracted by the NPC to do the mural and they were paid a handsome amount for the job. Thus the artists legally surrendered their right to artistic expression to the NPC which has all the legal authority to alter or change their masterpiece.

The controversy has been blown out of proportion. It does not deserve the attention given by media.

—VIC DEL FIERRO JR., president, Coalition for Consumers Protection and Welfare, 104 Gaiety St., Better Living, Parañaque City

On 'sidelines': Corrupt professors, helpless students

THIS IS IN REACTION TO THE letter titled "Teaching sideline" of Kristine Tyrol Rosales. (INQUIRER, 11/29/07)

Yes, college is definitely worse. I've gone through the same, or even worse, experiences.

I had professors selling tickets worth P200 each for a theater play, aside from out-of-date raffle tickets. And the play had no relevance to our subject. Yet we students were asked to submit a reaction paper on the play.

Other professors sold tickets worth P100 each for a basketball game, and please take note, it was compulsory on the part of the students to buy the tickets. Another "notorious sideline": We had professors who required us to buy a particular book. Aside from being expensive (more than P180), the book was full of grammatical and typographical errors; one of its authors was the professor who required us to buy it.

Another professor gave an examination that almost no one could possibly pass. However, since she was "considerate," she gave her students a chance to pass her subject. In exchange for a passing grade, each of us, her students, was required to attend her so-called "group dynamics" session which we thought would help us learn more about the subject. But the session turned out to be an excursion. Worse, she brought along some members of her family. The "academic activity" just wasted our time and, of course, our parents' money.

Now, consider this: College professors do not handle just one class; each of them usually handles more than five classes, and one class constitutes around 40-50 students. Just imagine how much the professors could earn with each sideline and how many students they could victimize.

These are just among the many sidelines—or "extracurricular activities"—college professors engage in. We, the students, are in a dilemma—whether to tolerate such acts and go with the "flow" or to condemn them at the risk of ending up with a transcript full of "5s," "dropped," "incomplete," and/or "withdrew."

We students do not want to tolerate these nefarious practices of college professors, but on our own, we cannot stop them.

—JESSICA E. DIMAYA, jessica_dimaya@yahoo.com

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Bichara's accusation was 'ill-motivated'

THIS REFERS TO THE NEWS item titled "RP envoy to Lebanon accused of malversation of public funds" (INQUIRER, 11/28/07), which was based on Albay Rep. Al Francis Bichara's privilege speech. Bichara said that based on his investigation, I "overpriced" the airplane fares of 139 distressed OFWs repatriated from Lebanon to the Philippines on May 7, 2007. In view of the seriousness of Bichara's accusations, allow me to make this reaction:

• The repatriation process and the purchase of the airline tickets at "$1,709.35 per ticket" or for a total of $237,600 were duly coordinated with and approved by the Department of Foreign Affairs.

• Bichara never inquired or talked to me about this "overpricing" issue. The basis of his "investigation" report apparently came from three embassy personnel who were sanctioned for sexual harassment, gross neglect of duty, misconduct, etc. upon my recommendation.

• One of these "anonymous" embassy informants worked with then-Ambassador Bichara during his 10-month stint in Lebanon.

• Bichara is very angry with me because he thinks I was responsible for the non-shipment to the Philippines of a 1999 Porsche Boxster car registered in the name of a consul who is now in Manila. (I learned that the "owner" of the Porsche car also blamed me for not having recommended the consul's extension of duty).

• The car is now in the possession of a Lebanese national, a "close friend" and "technical adviser" of then-Ambassador Bichara. The Lebanese has admitted that the car is owned by Bichara. Some embassy personnel also say that it is common knowledge that the car is owned by Bichara.

• It is not true that I waived the diplomatic immunity of the embassy's vice consul and his sister. In fact, thrice I didn't allow them to be interrogated by local intelligence authorities because of their diplomatic immunity.

Thus, it is very clear that Bichara's accusations against me are ill-motivated. I have nothing to do with the non-shipment of his Porsche car.

Back to Bichara's charge of "overpricing," the airlines say that ticket prices fluctuate depending on the circumstances, conditions and requirements to accommodate the needs of customers in specific flights. If Bichara considers the cost of "$1,709" per ticket for the 139 distressed OFWs who were repatriated on May 7, 2007 as "unconscionably high," (3.4 times more than the average rate of $500 per passenger that Bichara cited), consider this:

• When Ambassador Bichara repatriated a distressed OFW to the Philippines in March 2006, he paid $10,928 for her airline ticket. The amount is 21.856 times more than the average cost of a plane ticket.

As a congressman, Bichara should act responsibly and fairly and follow due process. It is very obvious that the sole objective of his speech was to destroy my name, my career and my family to avenge the non-shipment of his Porsche Boxster to the Philippines.

—MARIANO A. DUMIA, chargé d'affaires, Philippine Embassy, Beirut, Lebanon

The Filipino nation needs all sectors

IN GRADE SCHOOL, I USED TO LEAD my classmates in group projects. But many times, I found myself doing the work alone. Simply because some of my group mates didn't do the task assigned to them. Wanting to get the work done and at the same time a good grade, sometimes I had no choice but to do the work alone. It didn't feel right. It sucked. I didn't know if the problem was with me or with them but all I knew was that, as a group, we all needed to work together. Besides, whatever grade I got was the same grade they got.

Same goes with this nation. Every sector of society is a group that needs to work with the others. The executive branch is the head. But it cannot do the task in leading this nation alone. It needs every sector to contribute its share and do its job in order to get the work done which is to make this nation better. The government needs everyone's support—family, church, military, civil society, business sector, etc.

The Makati Business Club (MBC) faulted the Palace for not pushing hard enough for the passage of priority bills that are needed to enhance the country's global competitiveness. MBC's members are entitled to their opinion. Point taken.

But what the government needs now is not disapproval and criticism which it does get every moment. What our leaders need is our support and encouragement for them to do enough or even more than they have to.

This nation is one body. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. (1 Corinthians 12:26)

—JULIE ALORA, jalora_84@yahoo.com

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Army won't stop Surigao offensives vs NPA rebels

LIANGA, SURIGAO DEL SUR—The military has rejected anew the appeal of evacuees for a stop to operations being conducted against communist rebels in at least 12 remote villages of this town.

Col. Jose Viscarra, commander of the Army's 401st Infantry Brigade, said the operation against New People's Army (NPA) rebels in the Andap Valley complex will continue.

Viscarra's rejection of the appeal came in the wake of a warning from the town's municipal agriculturist that the operations were destroying government efforts to uplift the lives of the affected villagers.

Samuel Dollano, Lianga agriculturist, said his office has put up development projects during the last three years but these were being threatened by the military operations.

But Viscarra said civilians should not dictate to the military what to do.

Instead, Viscarra insisted that the residents could already return home and even offered them soldiers as security escorts.

He said with the soldiers, the evacuees would not fear being harmed by the rebels anymore.

But the evacuees, who belong to the Manobo tribal group, said the presence of the soldiers was the main reason they fled their homes.

They said only a halt to the operations could convince them to return to their villages.

During a visit by several nongovernment organizations on Thursday and Friday, the evacuees, now numbering 2,575 families, said they want to be home before Christmas.

Little children, grade schoolers and high school students expressed their aspirations for a safe and peaceful return through songs, stage plays, recitations and even hand drawn Christmas cards they gave to visitors.

"We hope that we can already go home along with our teachers. We are suffering now," read a pencil-written message on a pink Christmas card given by Ma. Gladys Perez, a Grade 5 pupil of the Tribal Filipino Literacy School in Km. 9.

Ronel Campos, president of the student council of the Alternative Learning Center and Agricultural Development, said their livelihood is in the villages and not in the evacuation centers.

Rev. Modesto Villasanta Jr., chair of Karapatan Surigao del Sur, said ransacked houses await the villagers.

He said Karapatan staffers, who went to check some of the abandoned villages on Saturday, found that some houses were forcibly opened and that the belongings of villagers were scattered everywhere. *Chris Panganiban, Inquirer Mindanao*

A FAMILY eats at an evacuation center in Diatagon, Lianga, Surigao del Sur. CHRIS PANGANIBAN/INQUIRER MINDANAO

A CLIFF in Tagaytay is transformed into a deck from which visitors could view the Taal Volcano, Taal Lake, and fish pens that have sprouted in the lake. REX DAVID C. ISRAEL/CONTRIBUTOR

Fish cages rise near danger zone at Taal Volcano

BATANGAS CITY—FISH CAGE OPERATORS can now legally put fish cages in the waters of Taal Lake in Talisay town despite its being declared a permanent danger zone by the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs).

This, after the Protected Areas Management Board executive committee (PAMB execom) approved a resolution on Nov. 14 to include the island in the Taal Lake's fish cage zones.

On the same day, the PAMB execom also passed a resolution opposing the plan of Environment Secretary Lito Atienza to phase out the existing fish cages in the lake "within two years."

Atienza said the move would help restore the lake to its pristine state and help save the endemic "tawilis" and "maliputo" fishes in Taal Lake from extinction.

In its past bulletins, the Phivolcs had repeatedly reminded people that the Taal Volcano Island is a "permanent danger zone."

Volcanologists said the Taal Volcano remained active and could explode anytime, that was why they were discouraging people from staying permanently in the area.

Phivolcs resident volcanologist Allan Luza of the Taal Volcano Observatory in Talisay, however, said that since last year, around 6,000 individuals had been living within the volcano.

Aside from farming and trekking to the volcanic crater, people in the volcano live by culturing *tilapia* in fish cages in Taal Lake.

Under the lake's Unified Rules and Regulations for Fisheries, approved by the PAMB in March, fish cages are only allowed in the four villages of Talisay—excluding the Taal Volcano Island known as Pulo. *Marlon Alexander Luistro, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

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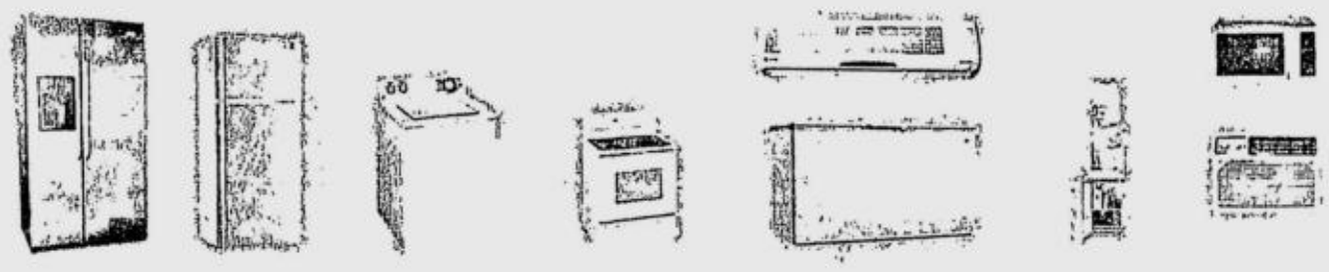

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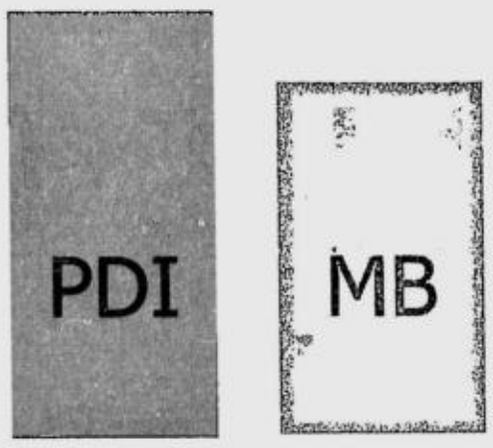

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Appeals court affirms move to void Baguio land titles

BAGUIO CITY—THE COURT OF Appeals has affirmed Solicitor General Antonio Nachura's decision in 2006 to void anomalous land titles in the summer capital, which has imperiled a proposed subdivision project that has been marketed to overseas Filipino workers and Manila realtors.

The ruling, which was rendered on Oct. 18 by the court's special former 8th Division, has emboldened a former mayor to pursue land graft cases against national officials.

Former Mayor Braulio Yaranon said the CA acknowledged the existence of a land scam in Baguio. He had caused the suspension of land processing in the city during his term in 2004 and 2005 because of these anomalies.

Lands in the city belong to a town site reservation and are sold only by auction.

Mysterious expansion

The appellate court confirmed that town site lands being developed by Prime Peak Properties Ltd. had tripled in size without explanation because of an anomalous real estate registration process that had gone undetected since the 1960s.

Prime Peak has custody of 672,364 square meters of real estate, which is titled to Gloria de Guzman, mother of the firm's president.

But authorities trace these titles to parcels of land measuring 501 square meters and 10,300 square meters, the court said.

It said Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez and the Office of the Solicitor General had grounds to nullify the titles issued for pieces of subdivision properties surrounding the Baguio Country Club that used to belong to Igorot landholders.

Prime Peak managed to restrain Gonzalez, former Solicitor General Alfredo Benipayo and his successor, Nachura, and the Baguio Register of Deeds from voiding the subdivision titles when it argued before the CA in 2006 that it had been the target of a conspiracy to disenfranchise the owners.

De Guzman had invoked a Baguio regional trial court ruling that validated her titles.

Lies

But Associate Justice Hakim Abdulwahid, who penned the decision, ruled that De Guzman's argument had no merit.

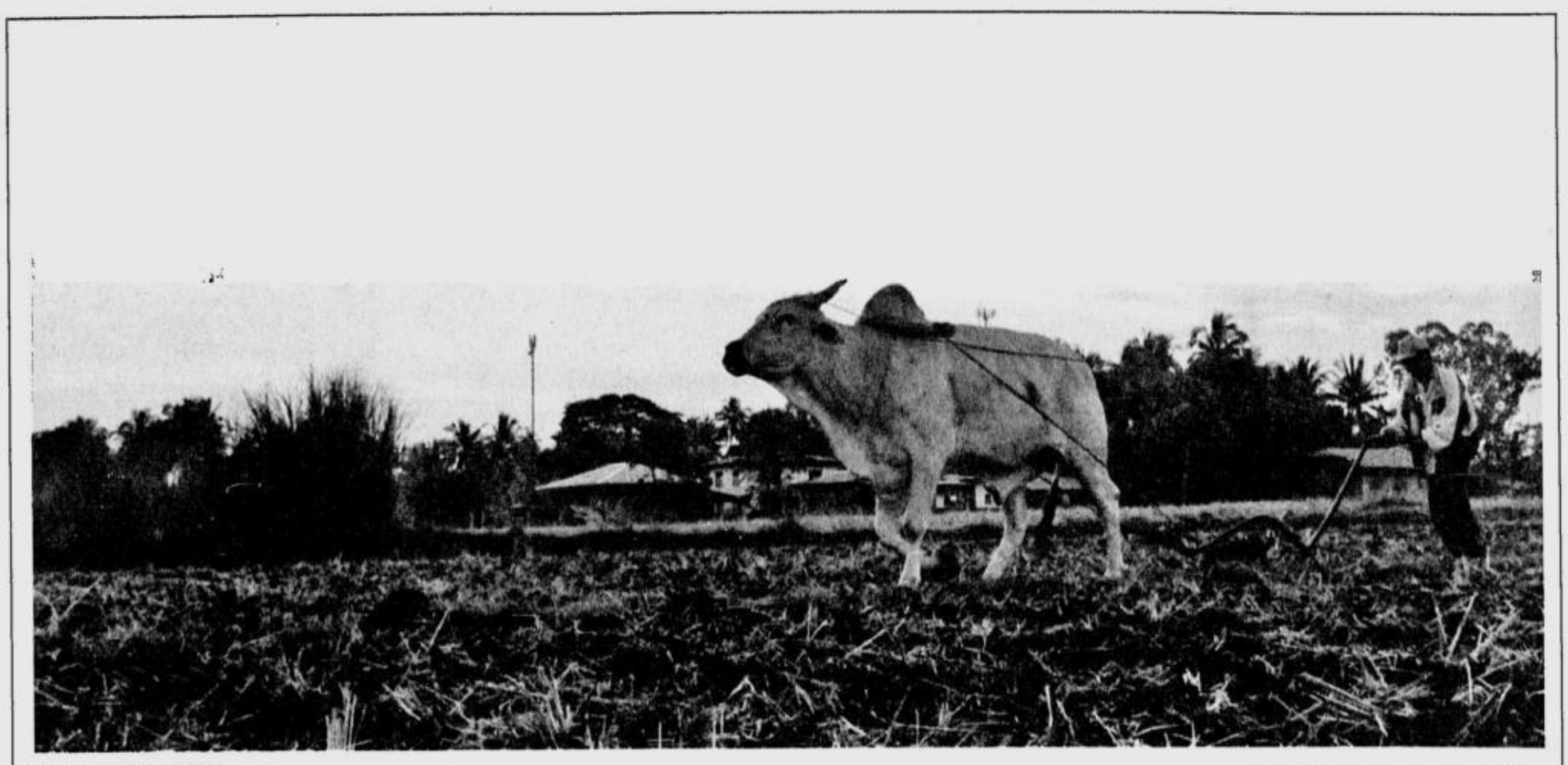
"Petitioner [De Guzman] may not evade the consequences of making untruthful statements in her applications for validation by disregarding its stipulation expressly making such misrepresentation a ground for the disapproval of her applications...," the ruling said.

The CA also discovered that some of the lands claimed by De Guzman had not been legitimized by both the American colonial government, and by the defunct Bureau of Lands between 1920 and 1968.

Yaranon said the decision could help reopen various cases involving conflicting TSA claims.

Many of these were lands that had been invalidated by the Supreme Court in 1973.

"I am awaiting feedback from the subdivision buyers so we can file a falsification case against the firm, and local and national officials who conspired to legitimize their fake land titles," Yaranon said. *Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon*



MORNING CHILL LEONCIO BALBIN JR./INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

A farmer in Candon City, Ilocos Sur, rises early to till his farm, taking advantage of the cold morning breeze that signals the start of the holidays to finish work before the heat of the noon sun comes.

House to probe car smuggling in Cebu

By Jolene R. Bulambot
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—THE HEAD OF the Presidential Anti-Smuggling Task Force (PASG) has been summoned to appear before the House committee on local government today as it begins its inquiry into allegations of rampant car smuggling in Cebu.

Undersecretary Antonio Villar, the head of the PASG, will be the first government official asked to appear before the House committee that is looking into what many believed is a multimillion-peso smuggling operation in Cebu.

Cebu City south district Rep. Antonio Cuenco, a member of the committee who initiated the investigation, said the inquiry would seek to find out from PASG what it has done to stop car smuggling in Cebu, as alleged by Cebu car dealers.

The 61-member committee, headed by Camiguin Rep. Pedro Romualdo, has scheduled the hearing today starting at 9:30 a.m. after taking cognizance of the complaints raised by officials of the Cebu Auto Dealers Association (Cada).

If Villar fails to appear, Cuenco said the House committee would be constrained to issue a subpoena to compel him to attend the hearing.

Cuenco said Cada officials were also invited as resource persons to shed light on their complaints about car smuggling in Cebu.

Cuenco said car brokers and officials from concerned government agencies would also be summoned to appear before the committee in the succeeding phases of the inquiry.

He said they would summon officials from the Bureau of Customs, Land Transportation Office and Department of Trade and Industry in the second phase of the inquiry, which will be held probably in Cebu.

Cuenco said the officials who will be invited would depend on the results of the investigation of PASG.

Cada earlier revealed the "huge discrepancy" between records of the Chamber of the Automotive Manufacturers in the Philippines Inc. (Campi) on the number of cars they sold in 2006 and those that were registered by the LTO in the same year.

Cada president Jose Manuel Cuenco, a nephew of Congressman Cuenco, said Campi records showed that 1,686 private cars and 3,274 utility and sports vehicles were sold by legitimate car dealers in Central Visayas in 2006 but LTO records revealed that it had registered 3,584 private cars and 21,637 utility and sports vehicles in the same period.

The importation of used vehicles was stopped at the Subic Bay Freeport after President Macapagal-Arroyo issued an executive order barring the sale of the vehicles outside of Subic.

The Supreme Court has upheld the executive order.

The EO was seen as a move to stop the smuggling of cars through Subic following results of investigation made by the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission finding several officials of the freeport liable for the freeport smuggling.

Authorities recently destroyed several units of luxury cars and sports utility vehicles as a gesture of toughness in the campaign against smuggling.

Julia's death is challenge to Peace Corps, says US envoy

ILAGAN, ISABELA—TAKING the murder of American teacher Julia Campbell as a challenge, Peace Corps volunteers worldwide have been working hard to sustain their mission to promote world peace and friendship, US Ambassador Kristie Kenney said here.

Kenney said the current crop of volunteers has been shrugging off the perils of being strangers in a foreign land and away from home "just to serve for peace and friendship."

Campbell was found dead in Batad, a village in Banaue, Ifugao, on April 18, 10 days after she was reported missing.

Her self-confessed killer, Juan Donald Duntugan, 25, is facing a murder charge before Judge Esther Piscozo Flor of the regional trial court in Lagawe, Ifugao.

"Campbell's death is a tragedy for all of us. Her life was cut short. But we have to move on. The Peace Corps will do more for the country. They have come here to serve," Kenney said.

She said Campbell's story would serve as a challenge for Peace Corps volunteers "to do the work that mattered to her."

The work of Campbell as community organizer and teacher serves as an inspiration to them, the ambassador said.

As a tribute to Campbell, an agro-forest park in Ifugao has been named after her. The park is being managed by a local nongovernment group, the Indigenous Farmers for Sustainable Agriculture.

"Peace Corps volunteers are working now with the nongovernment group in developing the park into an eco-tourism area that will also promote Ifugao culture," she said.

She said the US government has been working with the Philippine government to help "strengthen the capacity of local governments to reduce overfishing, destructive fishing practices, illegal logging, and destruction of natural forests."

Police have filed a murder complaint against a woodcarver who confessed to beating Campbell to death while she was hiking alone.

Duntugan has admitted that he bludgeoned to death Campbell, of Fairfax, Virginia, with a rock in Ifugao's Batad village on April 8.

Among the evidence submitted by police against Duntugan was a signed affidavit in which he claimed to have killed Campbell in a fit of rage when she accidentally bumped into him as he was fuming over a neighborhood spat, according to police. *Villamor Visaya Jr., Inquirer Northern Luzon*

US AMBASSADOR Kristie Kenney in a visit to Isabela province with Gov. Grace Padaca. Kenney said Peace Corps volunteers were not disheartened by the killing of Julia Campbell, but challenged by it.

VILLAMOR VISAYA/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

Police arrest 8 alleged drug gang members in Calabarzon

CAMP VICENTE LIM, LAGUNA—Police arrested eight men they said were members of a local drug syndicate.

The alleged gang leader, however, escaped during a buy-bust operation in Cabuyao, Laguna.

Arrested were Byron Sanchez, 24; Bernard Bryan Villegas, 21; Tolome Endrega, 23; Christopher Aranzan, 19; Nestor Sta. Teresa, 28; Angelo Galang, 25; Jeffrey Era, 23; and Randy dela Cruz, 25.

Senior Supt. Mark Edison Belarma, Criminal Investigation and Detection Group head in Calabarzon, said the suspects were arrested inside the house of a certain Jay-ar Baclaan in Barangay Marinig, Cabuyao, at around 9:30 p.m. last Saturday.

He said the operation was part of "Oplan Big Bertha" aimed at putting an end to all drug syndicates in the Calabarzon region.

Belarma said Baclaan was the suspected leader of the drug gang which supplies shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride) in Laguna and Muntinlupa City.

PO3 Noel Sumagaysay, CIDG Calabarzon investigator, said Baclaan was on a watch list of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency as among the suppliers of illegal drugs in Metro Manila. *Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Team formed to check progress of projects in Iloilo

By David Israel Sinay
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—THE CITY GOVernment has formed a team to check the progress of various infrastructure projects worth hundreds of millions of pesos funded by the national government.

Mayor Jerry Treñas said the team was composed of architects and engineers from the city planning and city engineers' office.

Aside from checking the projects' progress, the team would also check if they were adhering to standards specified by the projects' designs.

Treñas formed the monitoring team in the wake of delays in the construction of the P408-million Infante Flyover Project that traverses General Luna and Marcelo H. del Pilar Streets.

The project, funded by the Department of Public Works and Highways-Presidential Bridge Project Office (DPWH-PBPO), was earlier suspended due to alleged discrepancies in some portions of the project.

The DPWH-PBPO found that the British contractor, Mabey and Johnson Ltd., failed to comply with the project's specifications, including the required strength of reinforced bars at the piers.

DPWH regional director Rolando Asis said the flyover was already about 97 percent done when the irregularity was discovered.

The DPWH would do the corrective work and has started retrofitting the four board piles that needed strengthening, Asis said.

The agency would also handle the unfinished portions of the flyover, to include embankment and approaches, the concreting of the bridge sheets, and part of the retaining wall at approaches, Asis added.

Asis said the DPWH will spend P10.8 million for the corrective and completion work, including P7 million that is still part of the original contract cost.

Asis said he has no idea how much was already released to the contractor since the flyover was a nationally funded project and directly supervised by the DPWH central office.

The flyover, which was started in April and was to have been completed last August, is 305 meters long with a load capacity of 20 tons.

"The structural capacity is designed to stand a magnitude 7 to 7.2 earthquake," Asis said.

He said the Cebu-based Rigid Construction Corp. was subcontracted by the DPWH regional office for the labor and materials. Asis said that the same firm was sub-contracted by the London-based contractor "but on labor alone."

"It was the Mabey and Johnson Ltd. that supplied the materials," Asis said.

Asis said he hopes the project would be open to vehicular traffic before the year ends.

Aside from the flyover project, the national government has just opened the P6.5-billion Iloilo International Airport in Sta. Barbara town and now finishing the P50-million Iloilo City-Sta. Barbara Road.

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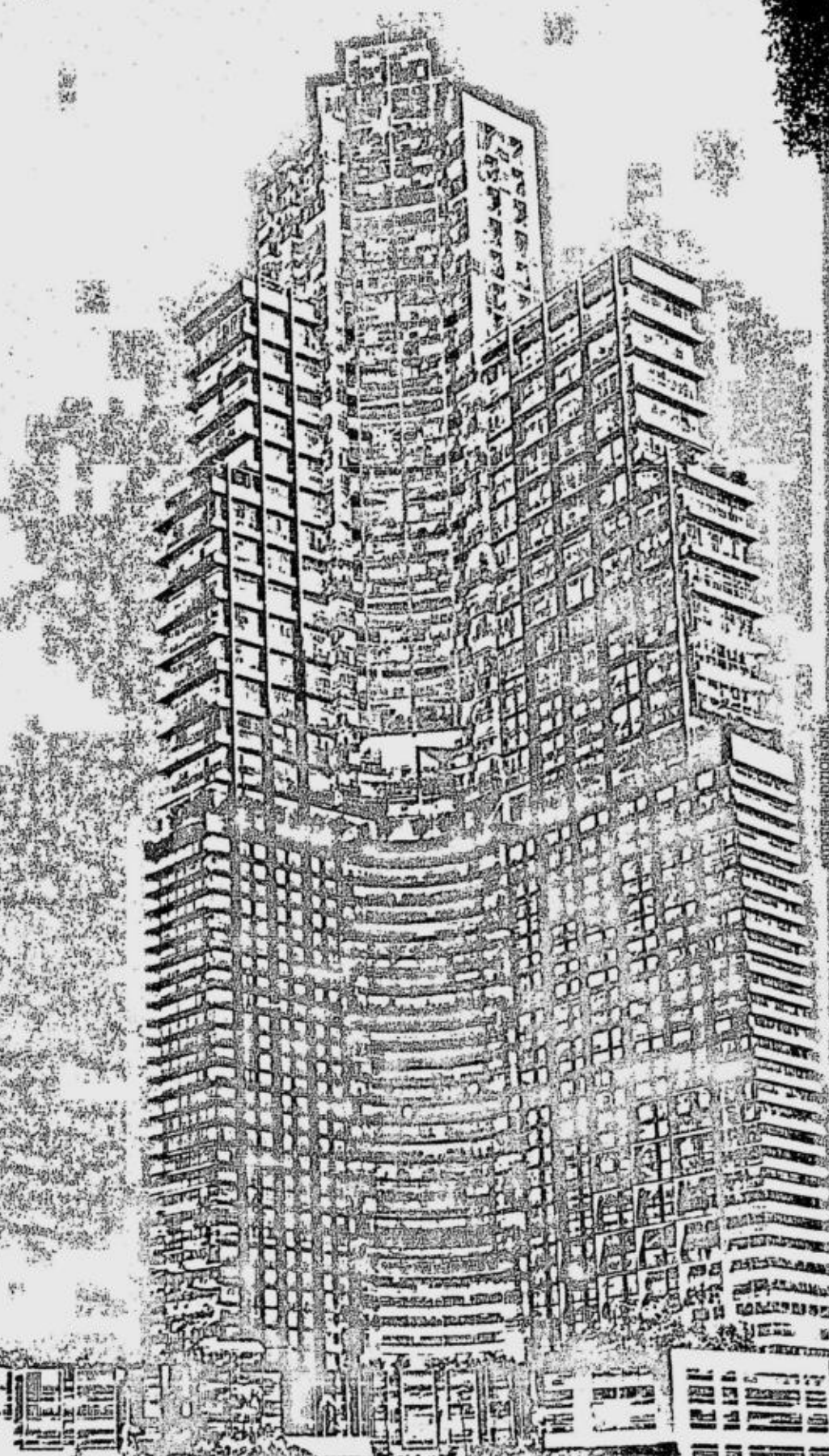

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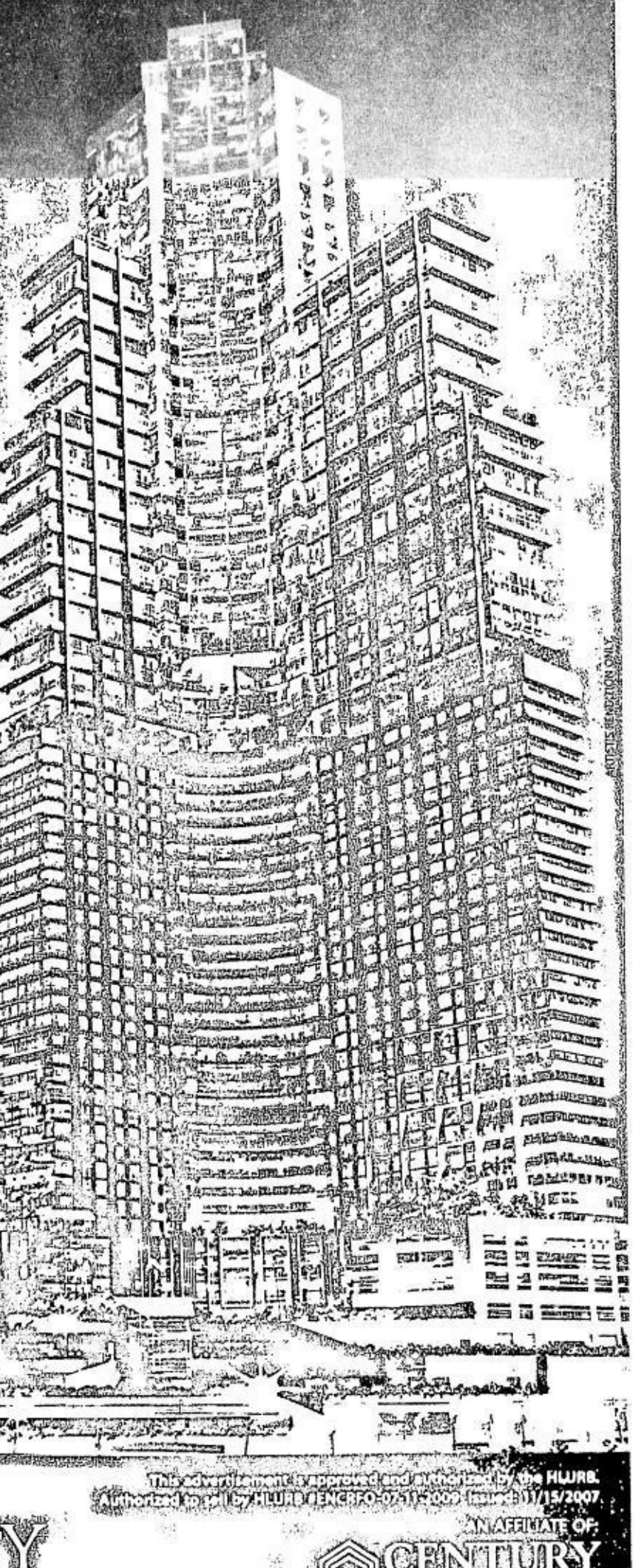

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Police officer in traffic row suspended

Accused allegedly fired at former Bulacan gov's convoy

By Jeannette I. Andrade, Alcuin Papa and DJ Yap

A POLICE OFFICIAL ACCUSED of firing at the convoy of former Bulacan Gov. Josie de la Cruz and mauling her driver during a traffic altercation was relieved of his post and placed under suspension yesterday.

Criminal Investigation and Detection Group chief Director Edgardo Doromal told reporters in Camp Crame that Chief Insp. Jethro Lim was transferred to the Headquarters Maintenance and Technical Services Division in Camp Crame pending the results of an investigation into the allegations against him.

Lim was formerly assigned to the CIDG field office in the Northern Police District.

Senior Supt. Asher Dolina, CIDG-National Capital Region chief, meanwhile, said he recommended the relief of Lim and the holding of an independent probe into the matter because "others might think the investigation would be biased."

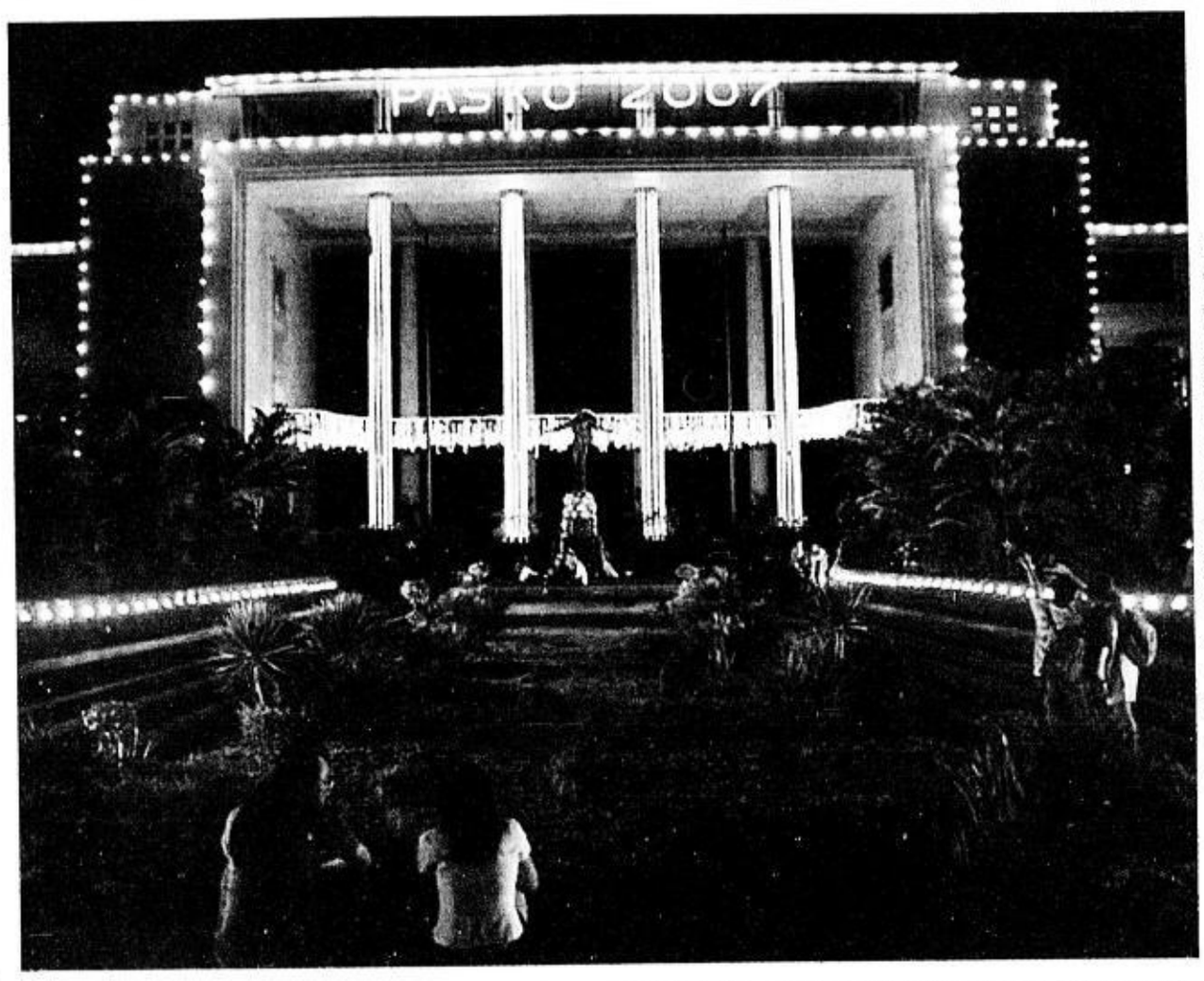
The incident happened at 10 p.m. Sunday on the northbound lane of Edsa in Guadalupe, Makati City.

Makati police chief Supt. Gilbert Cruz said the convoy of De la Cruz, who was aboard a Mitsubishi Pajero, was on its way to Bulacan after the group attended a wedding in Tagaytay City in Cavite province.

Eduardo Magsakay, the driver of the Nissan Safari which served as a backup vehicle to De la Cruz's vehicle, told the police that Lim, who was driving a Toyota Corolla, tried to get ahead of the convoy.

Magsakay said he tried to stop Lim from overtaking the convoy—a standard security measure for VIPs—by driving close to the Corolla and nearly sideswiping it, a move, he ad-

POLICE/ A20



DECK THE HALL WITH STRINGS OF LIGHTS
Students of the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City take a break from their classes to look at the Christmas lights at Quezon Hall, the seat of the university administration. The "Pag-iilaw sa Pasko" is among the activities leading to UP's celebration of its centennial next year.

MANMAN TEJETO/ CONTRIBUTOR

Jail break 'mastermind' gives up to San Juan cops

By Kristine L. Alave

THE ALLEGED MASTERMIND in last week's prison break at the San Juan City jail surrendered to authorities yesterday.

Alberto Panelo, 30, was turned over to San Juan police chief Supt. Rodelio Jocson by a policeman based in North Harbor, Manila. Jocson said Panelo's family convinced him to turn himself in.

Panelo and five others considered as "low risk prisoners" escaped from their detention cell in the city at dawn last Thursday.

According to witnesses and the police, the six destroyed the cell door's cement latch and jumped out of a hole in an unfinished room at the back of the police station that was under renovation.

Two of the escapees, Joemike Dacanay, 22 and Marcelino Pamintuan, 21, who were recaptured hours after their flight, tagged Panelo as the mastermind of the jail break.

They said it was Panelo's idea to break the latch and escape through a hole in the unfinished room.

Another detainee, Guillermo Lacson, was recaptured in Marikina City on Thursday afternoon.

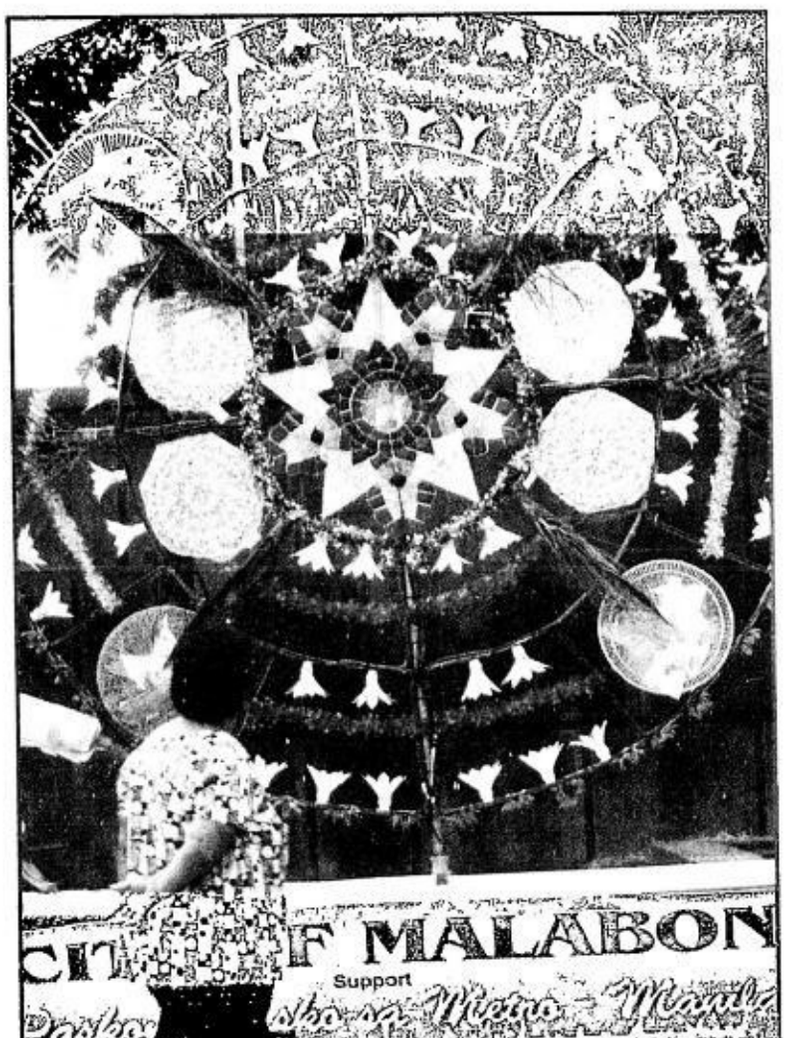
Denial

In a statement to the police, Panelo denied that he had engineered the escape.

He said he and the other detainees wanted out because they missed their relatives.

With Panelo under police custody, the police are looking for only two more escaped detainees—Manolito Ong and Rigor Alejandra.

Jocson said the prisoners' families have promised to cooperate with them to determine their whereabouts.



GIANT 'PAROL'
A woman admires a huge Christmas lantern on display on Roxas Boulevard, near Rizal Park in Manila. RYAN LIM

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5 dead, 60 hurt in NLEX road mishaps

By Nancy C. Carvajal

FIVE PEOPLE DIED AND 60 others were injured in five separate accidents on the North Luzon Expressway yesterday.

Betty Jose, spokesperson of the Manila Management Tollways Corp. which supervises the operations of the NLEX, said the driver of a dump truck was pinned to death when his vehicle smashed into a 10-wheeler truck which had broken down just before the Balintawak toll gate. The incident happened at round 4:30 a.m.

Nearly six hours later, a Sierra Madre bus smashed into another 10-wheeler truck and three vans when it abruptly changed lanes while trying to avoid a slow moving bus. Five persons were injured in the incident.

At 11 a.m, an air-conditioned Genesis bus with plate number TWC 496 bound for Manila crashed into the highway's median barrier, leaving four people dead and 43 injured. Two of the passengers were instantly killed while two others died in the hospital while receiving treatment, Jose said.

According to Catherine del Mundo, a traffic management and safety supervisor, the driver fled after the accident.

"We also tried to call the bus company's number listed in the phonebook but no one was answering," she said.

Not more than 15 minutes later, a six-wheeler truck carrying hogs fell over on its left side.

According to Jose, the driver was looking at the site of the previous accident, causing him to lose control of the vehicle.

Eight minutes later, not far from the site of the two accidents, a Victory Liner bus also fell on its left side when it tried to avoid another vehicle.

Eleven persons were injured and brought to the hospital.

"We advise drivers to check their vehicles before traveling because yesterday's accidents were due mostly to defective brakes," Jose said.

CHRISTMAS CHEER
US Ambassador to the Philippines Kristie Kenney hands over Christmas gifts to children at the Our Lady of Peace Mission Hospital yesterday in Parañaque City. NIÑO JESUS ORBETA

METROBRIEFS

Manila drugstore owners charged

THE NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation has filed charges against the Chinese and Filipino owners and operators of several drugstores in Manila for allegedly selling unregistered medicine.

Charged with violating Republic Act No. 3720 (Foods, Drugs and Cosmetic Act) at the Manila Prosecutor's Office were the owners and operators of Vitalife Drugstore, Kimsheng Chinese Drugstore and Central Chinese Drugstore, all located on Ongpin Street in Sta. Cruz. Arnel Dalumpines, chief of the NBI Special Task Force, said agents raided the drugstores and seized several boxes of drugs, including dietary food supplements, which were not licensed by the Bureau of Food and Drugs.

Tina G. Santos

L. Nepomuceno; 84

LEONARDO "*Mang* Nepo" Nepomuceno, father of entertainer Willie Nepomuceno, died on Dec. 9 at the age of 84. *Mang* Nepo started out as an amateur boxer using the name "Kid Lochinvar." He joined the Quezon City police force in 1953, eventually becoming a detective until his resignation in 1971. He is survived by his widow, Paquita; children Willie, Winnie and Winkie and grandchildren. His body lies at the Paket Santiago Funeral Homes, V. Gomez Street in San Roque, Marikina City. Interment will be at the Loyola Memorial Park in Marikina City on Wednesday, Dec. 12.

UPCM homecoming

THE UP College of Medicine will celebrate its annual homecoming from Dec. 14 to 20, an event that will be led by the Silver Jubilarians of Class 1982 and the Golden Jubilarians of Class 1957. The celebration will kick off on Dec. 14 at 7 a.m. with the UPMAS Golf Tournament at the Wack Wack Golf Club. Other activities are individual class reunions and outings from Dec. 16 to 18, the CME Medical Symposium at the UP Nursing Auditorium on Dec. 19 and the grand homecoming dinner-dance at the Sofitel (formerly Philippine Plaza Hotel) at 7 p.m. on Dec. 20.

Animal rights group pushes bid vs Manila oceanarium

DID YOU KNOW

IT WAS not only because of the Beatles' popularity that their July 1966 concert at the Rizal Memorial Football Stadium in Manila turned out to be memorable. It was said that the band had "snubbed" an appointment with then First Lady Imelda Marcos and some 300 children of politicians and military officers in Malacañang.

In the "Beatles' Anthology," band member Ringo Starr recalled turning on the TV and seeing Marcos screaming, "They've let me down." There were also shots of empty plates and crying kids "because the Beatles hadn't turned up." The band claimed they did not know they were supposed to show up at the Palace earlier that day.

As a result of the "snub," only one motorcycle escort accompanied the departing Beatles to the Manila International Airport, in contrast to the hundreds of policemen that welcomed them upon their arrival. Some fans who showed their displeasure at the band's behavior reportedly spat at them, causing the members to hide behind monks and nuns.

Kate Pedroso, Inquirer Research

By Jerome Aning

MAINTAINING THAT MARINE parks present a distorted view of wildlife, the animal rights group People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (Peta) yesterday asked the Department of Tourism to reconsider its endorsement of the Manila Ocean Park.

It also urged the public to boycott the facility to show their objection to keeping sea animals in captivity.

In a letter to Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace Durano, Peta-Asia Pacific campaigns manager Rochelle Regodon said the only thing marine parks teach people is that "it is acceptable to keep animals in captivity—bored, restricted, lonely and far from their natural homes."

"The marine park industry claims that it exists purely for conservation and educational purposes. However, we must ask this question, 'What can be gained from watching marine animals swim in endless circles in concrete tanks full of chlorinated water?'" she told Durano in her letter, a copy of which she provided the INQUIRER.

Peta has come out with a poster opposing the oceanarium. It features a group of fish with the messages, "Save Our Schools," "Don't support aquariums" and "Teach compassion without confinement."

"We are opposed to keeping animals in captivity because of the suffering it causes them. Life in a tank is literally a death sentence," another Peta campaigner, Jennilyn Tagasa, told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

"The park can never replicate these animals' natural habitats. Marine animals are meant to swim freely. At the park, they are confined to areas much smaller than their natural environments and are deprived of everything that is natural and important to them," Regodon said.

The P1 billion Manila Ocean Park, behind the Quirino Grandstand at Rizal Park, is a project of the Philippine Tourism Authority with Singaporean and Malaysian investors. It is scheduled to open at the end of the month.

CA justices logic stupid

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

BECAUSE OF HER REQUEST TO the emir of Kuwait, President Gloria has saved overseas worker Marilou Ranario from execution for killing her abusive employer.

Our President's actions are a bit ironic.

She would go out of her way to save two Filipino lives abroad—those of Ranario's and Angelo de la Cruz, who was kidnapped by Iraqi terrorists who threatened to kill him if the Philippine military contingent was not withdrawn from Iraq—but could not, or would not, spare the lives of hundreds of leftists and journalists who were supposedly executed by her security forces!

* * *

To Filipino women thinking of working as domestics in Arab countries, like Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, please be warned that you're taking a big risk.

Most Arab employers are difficult to get along with.

From the hundreds of complaints over the years my temporarily defunct radio-TV public service program, "Isumbong mo kay Tulfo," had received, I've come to the conclusion that most of them treat their maids as slaves.

* * *

The Court of Appeals said it affirmed the life sentence on quadriplegic Ronaldo "Jeff" Quesada because it believed that the complete paralytic committed rape with the aid of his cousin, Iza Kristine Ocampo.

The appellate court justices who reviewed Jeff's case said he could "manipulate his genitals."

What crazy logic!

Which woman, no matter how depraved, would hold the genitals of a man, even her cousin, and guide it into a woman's vagina?

On the issue of Jeff being able to "manipulate" his genitals, he can't even hold a spoon to feed himself.

So how could he masturbate?

When he takes a pee, his penis has to be held by another person so his urine would spurt into the toilet bowl or *arinola*.

Those honorable "wise" justices who condemned Jeff to a life in prison should have their heads examined.

* * *

I read the alleged victim's statement to the police.

In that statement, she said she submitted to Jeff's carnal desires because he was holding a gun.

I still have that affidavit she made to the police.

But the same affidavit was never used by the Bulacan provincial prosecutor during the trial.

What she said in the trial was that a gun was beside Jeff while he was raping her.

* * *

Why doesn't Sen. Bong Revilla leave his successor at the Optical Media Board, Edu Manzano, to do his job?

Different folks have different strokes.

Edu has his own style of running the OMB.

Bong had his.

Revilla had his time, he's already a senator, although Manzano would have done a better job if their roles were reversed now.

* * *

The reason Bong is raising a storm is probably because he wants the public's attention on his movie which is an entry for the forthcoming Manila Film Festival.

But do you know that the action star-turned-senator is unpopular among movie bit players or "extras"?

One extra told me Bong treats him and his fellow extras like houseboys.

In contrast, Edu treats all his movie and TV companions, whether fellow actors or extras, as his co-equal, according to my source.

Police officer in traffic ...

From page A19

mitted, that could have irked the policeman.

When the convoy reached the People Power Monument, Lim, according to Magsakay, fired at his vehicle. The bullet hit the left passenger side window of the Safari, pierced the glass and ricocheted off De la Cruz's Pajero, which had bulletproof windows.

At this point, Magsakay said he stopped his vehicle and confronted Lim who identified himself as a policeman assigned at the CIDG in Camp Crame.

He added that Lim took out his badge and identification card and at gunpoint, slapped him with his ID card before punching and kicking him.

A certain PO1 Evangelista, who said he was a member of De la Cruz's security detail, reportedly tried to pacify Lim but was rebuffed.

Magsakay told the police that Lim confiscated his driver's license and said he could retrieve the document from the CIDG headquarters in Camp Crame.

Lim then left the scene when members of media started arriving.

Doromal, meanwhile, said the incident was a mere traffic altercation and not an attempt on the life of De la Cruz.

"*Malayo siguro* (I think that is a distant possibility). It was a traffic altercation, not an assassination attempt," he told reporters.

He explained that Lim chased De la Cruz's backup car after it sideswiped his car.

According to Doromal, Lim told him he spotted a high-powered firearm inside the Safari and fired a warning shot.

He added that Lim thought the passengers of the vehicle were car thieves.

"It's a modus operandi of car thieves to hit their target cars. When the vehicles come to a stop, guns are pointed at the driver and the vehicle is taken," Doromal said.

METRO
Citizen's Call

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Your stories. Tell us all about it.

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- Garbage dumped on your street unmake your day?
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- Are you up in arms against the demolition of an ancestral house?
- Awed by a little-known barangay project with a big positive impact in your community?
- Got stuck in potholes?
- Fed up with cussing and feuding neighbors?
- Is there an everyday role model in your neighborhood?
- Delightful/dreadful finds on your way to work?

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P.S. Please don't send tips on criminal activities and scams. Call the police.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Lim orders probe of SK federation polls

By Allison W. Lopez

MANILA MAYOR ALFREDO LIM HAS ordered the police to look into complaints that there was fraud in last week's election of the city's Sangguniang Kabataan Federation officials.

Russel Ibay, 17, son of former Manila Councilor Ric Ibay, won overwhelmingly over his rivals for the post in the Dec. 6 elections. The other candidates on his ticket also won.

Their victory, however, was marred by allegations that they shelled out money on two occasions to voters, based on the affidavits executed by several SK chairs who went to the police.

Edward Quindoza, 17, SK chair of Barangay 711, Zone 78, District 5, claimed in his affidavit that he and many other youth leaders received P500 and P1,000 in separate meetings organized by Ibay's group on Nov. 23 and Dec. 5.

The amounts were given supposedly for their "gimmicks" or for "transportation expenses."

To prove their claims, the youth leaders showed the police envelopes bearing the name of the younger Ibay which contained cash. They also presented free concert tickets and a letter from the Department of the Interior and Local Government inviting youth leaders to an overnight meeting on Dec. 5, the day before the elections.

The youth claimed they were taken to the Sohotel Ermita where, along with around 400 SK chairs, they stayed overnight before being taken the next day to the San Andres Sports Complex to cast their votes.

"We will verify if a convention was held there and who paid the bill. It would have cost the sponsors at least P1,000 per person," said Senior Insp. Marcelo Reyes, chief of the investigation and follow-up branch of the District Special Project Unit.

Contacted for comment, the older Ibay denied the allegations against his son.

"Anyone can say those things, even I can get young people to testify. My son won fair and square with 441 votes. I feel sad that this is happening because this involves the youth," he said.

"Only politics will prevent him from taking his place in the city council," he added. As SK Federation president, his son will represent the youth in the City Council.

Fujimori to be tried for murder, kidnapping

LIMA, PERU—SEVEN YEARS after fleeing Peru in disgrace, former President Alberto Fujimori goes on trial Monday on charges of murder and kidnapping stemming from his alleged use of a death squad to fight a bloody insurgency in the early 1990s.

It is the first time in Peru's history that a former president faces a public trial for crimes committed during his administration. It is also one of the few cases of a Latin American leader being tried after his presidency ended.

A three-judge Supreme Court panel will review charges that Fujimori authorized an army death squad to identify and kill suspected Maoist Shining Path guerrillas and collaborators.

The trial will take place at the police base on the eastern outskirts of Lima where Fujimori is being held.

Fujimori will face charges that he authorized the 1992 death-squad slayings of nine students and a professor at La Cantuta University, and the 1991 killings of 15 people in a tenement in Lima's Barrios Altos neighborhood. If convicted, he faces up to 30 years in prison and a fine of some $33 million.

He is also charged with ordering the kidnapping of a prominent journalist and a businessman, who were interrogated by army intelligence agents and released.

Fujimori, 69, denies any involvement.

In later trials the judges will weigh whether Fujimori illegally used $15 million in state money to pay his intelligence chief Vladimiro Montesinos to quit, authorized bribes to congressmen and illegal phone taps, and secretly bought a TV station for political propaganda with state money.

A separate court will determine whether Fujimori ordered an illegal search of the apartment of Montesinos' estranged wife in which military aides posing as a prosecution team took away more than 50 boxes and 50 suitcases suspected of containing incriminating evidence.

COLORADO SHOOTING

Four people were shot to death and six were wounded in Colorado on Sunday in two church-related shootings in the U.S. Christian heartland

① **Arvada** Two killed and two injured after gunman entered missionary training centre

② **Colorado Springs** Four wounded when gunman opened fire outside New Life Church after Sunday services

REUTERS

4 dead in 2 shootings in Colorado

COLORADO SPRINGS, COLorado—Four people were killed on Sunday in two separate shootings at religious establishments in the state of Colorado, local authorities said.

The first shooting occurred in Arvada, a suburb of Denver, in the early hours of Sunday when a young gunman opened fire at a Christian missionary center. Two staff members in their mid-20s were killed and two others wounded.

The gunman fled before authorities reached the scene.

About 12 hours later, another two people were killed—including the suspected attacker—in a shooting near a church in Colorado Springs.

City Police Chief Richard Meyers said four people were wounded in the rampage, some with "life-threatening injuries." The assailant was killed by a church security guard, Meyers said.

When police arrived on the scene after receiving an emergency call "they found that the active shooter had been shot by a security staff member of the church," Meyers said. "A courageous security staff member who probably saved many lives today."

Earlier reports had put the number killed in Colorado Springs at five.

It was unclear if the shootings were related, but Arvada Police Chief Don Wick said his office was working with its counterparts in Colorado Springs to determine if there was a link.

The two shootings took place 120 km apart—a one-and-a-half hour drive.

The shooting in Colorado Springs occurred near the New Life Church, an evangelical congregation of about 10,000 members.

"It's a sad day and a tragic day in Colorado Springs," said Mayor Lionel Rivera. "This is not the kind of things you expect in our community."

The church pastor, Brady Boyd, saw the shooting from his office. "What I experienced from my window was surreal," he said.

Congregants "came to church to worship, what happened today was a tragedy," said Boyd. "It's unfortunate that we live in a society where this happens, but it does."

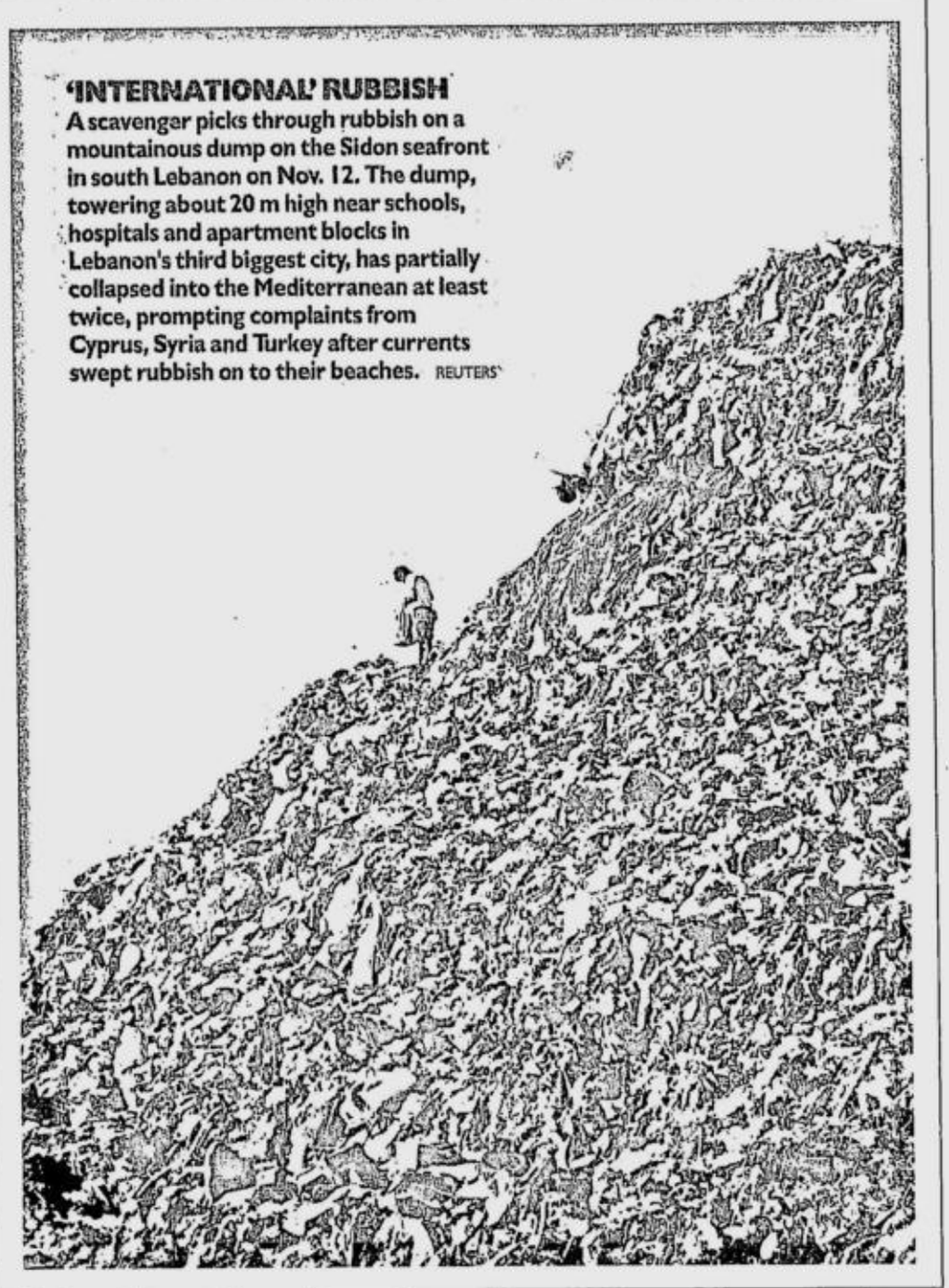
The New Life Church made headlines in 2006 when its founder and pastor, Ted Haggard, resigned after admitting to what he called "sexual immorality." Haggard had a high public profile and was a vocal supporter of President George W. Bush in 2004.

The Colorado shootings came just days after a teenager armed with a semi-automatic rifle opened fire on Christmas shoppers at an Omaha shopping mall in Nebraska on Wednesday, killing at least eight people before turning the gun on himself.

Last week's mall rampage in Nebraska had already revived debate about gun crime in the United States, which authorities say is home to more than 200 million privately owned firearms for a population of just over 300 million. *AFP*

'INTERNATIONAL' RUBBISH

A scavenger picks through rubbish on a mountainous dump on the Sidon seafront in south Lebanon on Nov. 12. The dump, towering about 20 m high near schools, hospitals and apartment blocks in Lebanon's third biggest city, has partially collapsed into the Mediterranean at least twice, prompting complaints from Cyprus, Syria and Turkey after currents swept rubbish on to their beaches. REUTERS



A growing source of fear for migrants in Malaysia

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia—When his turn comes to stand watch, Kang Long posts himself at a window, peering into the dark streets outside the tiny apartment where his fellow migrant workers sleep 10 to a room.

"We always fear, especially at night," he said. "Maybe there will be a raid. Where will we run? I worry for my wife and children. I've been thinking of moving to the jungle."

Kang Long, 43, is an ethnic Chin refugee from Burma (Myanmar), one of as many as three million foreign workers whose labor on farms, factories and construction sites and in service industries supports the economy of this bustling Southeast Asian nation. About half are estimated to be here illegally.

Like foreign workers elsewhere, they are resented by many local people and demonized by politicians. Here in Malaysia they have become the targets of an expanding campaign of harassment, arrest, whippings, imprisonment and deportation.

In 2005, the government transformed a volunteer self-defense corps, created in the 1960s to guard against Communists, into a strike force deputized to hunt down illegal immigrants.

This force, called Rela, now numbers nearly half a million mostly untrained volunteers—more than the total number of Malaysia's military and police in this nation of 27 million. Its leaders are armed and have the right to enter a home or search a person on the street without a warrant. By an official count, its uniformed volunteers carry out 30 to 40 raids a night.

As it takes over more police and prison duties, Rela is drawing the condemnation of local and foreign human rights groups. They accuse the volunteers, some as young as 16, of violence, extortion, theft and illegal detention.

"They break into migrant lodgings in the middle of the night without warrants, brutalize inhabitants, extort money and confiscate cellphones, clothing, jewelry and household goods, before handcuffing migrants and transporting them to detention camps for illegal immigrants," Human Rights Watch said in a report in May.

They often fail to honor legitimate documentation and sometimes destroy documents in order to justify their actions, the group said.

In an interview, Rela's director-general, Zaidon Asmuni, dismissed the concerns of human rights groups, saying the nation's security was at stake and demanded an aggressive defense. "We have no more Communists at the moment, but we are now facing illegal immigrants," he said. "As you know, in Malaysia illegal immigrants are enemy No. 2." Enemy No. 1, he said, was drugs.

Illegal immigrants, if caught, are brought before a judge for a trial. If convicted, they face up to five years in jail and a whipping, then deportation. *NYT*

Casinos in Macau victims of colossal Las Vegas-style scam

HONG KONG—ILLEGAL, under-the-table betting is depriving Macau casinos of up to 50 percent of all gambling revenues, a report on Monday said, in a scam reminiscent of the mafia's Las Vegas heyday.

The widespread "skimming" could have lost the city's giant casinos more than HK$100 billion (US$13 billion) in the past five years, according to a survey of industry executives polled by the South China Morning Post.

If the size of the scam is correct, the English-language daily said it would represent the biggest known example of casino skimming ever, costing the Macau taxpayers $40 billion over five years.

The survey asked five senior executives at licensed casinos in Macau how big they thought the problems was. On average, the respondents said the illegal activity represented 78 percent of the official market for VIP gamblers.

Manual Joaquim das Neves, director of Macau's Gaming Inspection and Co-ordination bureau, denied the problem was so widespread, but conceded it needed to be addressed.

"The government is aware of this problem and has been taking measures to prevent it," he was quoted as saying by the newspaper.

Side-betting occurs when a gambler and a junket agent—the key figures in bringing high-rollers to each casino and much sought after by operators—negotiate an "off-table" agreement before entering a casino.

Under the agreement, each amount bet on the table will be matched or multiplied by a separate "off-table bet" between the two sides, without the casinos knowledge.

The bet would avoid the high 40-percent tax on gross casino revenues in Macau, allowing the junket operator to offer a better return to the gambler.

"A high tax rate will always provide an incentive for some operators to take revenue 'off the table,'" said David Green, a partner at financial services firm PricewaterhouseCoopers in Macau.

"Side betting is notoriously difficult to detect. I suspect it affects all casino jurisdictions with VIP operations. It should be recognized for what it is: a financial crime."

The tiny southern Chinese territory has become a gaming haven in recent years, attracting major US casino operators from Las Vegas.

Last year, it overtook the total revenues for 40 gaming centers along Las Vegas's famous strip on the back of fervent gambling from mainland Chinese.

Organized crime bosses played a major role in the financing of hotels in "Sin City" helping speed up the city's development in the 1950s and over the next 30 years skimmed millions of unreported, untaxed dollars out of the city.

Their decline from the end of the 1960s was depicted in the film "Casino" starring Robert De Niro, with the film's ending showing the destruction of the old hotels to make way for the gambling palaces. *AFP*

CIA official in US Congress inquiry called a 'hero'

WASHINGTON—AT A CONFERENCE IN El Paso in mid-August, Rep. Silvestre Reyes of Texas, the Democratic chair of the House Intelligence Committee, heaped praise on a man whose exploits, he joked, had been the inspiration for the television show "24."

From fast cars to fine wines, Reyes said, the appetites of the man, Jose A. Rodriguez Jr., are the stuff of legend. Then turning serious, Reyes hailed Rodriguez's three decades of undercover work for the CIA, where he recently stepped down as head of its clandestine service, and called Rodriguez an "American hero."

Four months later, Rodriguez's role in the destruction of hundreds of hours of videotape of harsh interrogations of two operatives of al-Qaida is at the center of an inquiry by Reyes' committee on Capitol Hill. With a separate Justice Department inquiry that could lead to a full criminal investigation into the matter, the man who spent a career in the shadows has been thrust uneasily into the spotlight.

Rodriguez is hardly the only current or former agency official under scrutiny. In the months ahead, investigators will try to reconstruct the chain of events leading up to the decision in November 2005 to destroy the interrogation tapes, and to determine who else inside the agency may have approved the decision.

According to a former top intelligence official who has spoken to Rodriguez in recent days, Rodriguez remains confident that he acted lawfully and had the authority to destroy the tapes. He could not be reached for comment. Whether CIA lawyers in fact approved the destruction will be a question for investigators in Congress, the Justice Department and the CIA inspector general's office. Some congressional officials said they want to know why Porter J. Goss, the CIA director at the time the tapes were destroyed, appears never to have notified congressional committees about the destruction.

Reyes declined a request on Sunday for an interview about Rodriguez, but issued a statement saying his committee is planning not just to examine the circumstances of the destruction of the videotapes, but to conduct a "broad review" of the CIA's detention and interrogation program.

"I'm not looking for scapegoats," his statement said. *NYT*

LINCOLD

Icicles hang from a statue of Abraham Lincoln in Springfield, Ill., on Dec. 9. The brunt of an icy winter storm system hit central Illinois leaving up to a quarter of an inch of ice accumulation. AP

Canada judge says US no haven for refugees

LATE LAST MONTH, A FEDERAL judge in Canada ruled that the United States had violated international conventions on torture and the rights of refugees.

The decision has caused quite a stir in Canada. The Globe and Mail, a Toronto newspaper, said it was "outrageous, and has the whiff of Canadian cultural superiority about it."

The decision, by Justice Michael L. Phelan, does at first blush sound like a judicial stunt. You don't often see judges instructing their own governments about how to conduct foreign affairs. It is less common still to see them engaging in freelance diplomacy by chastising foreign governments.

Phelan's decision was, moreover, based on affidavits from about a dozen American professors and lawyers. However sound their criticisms of American practices were, it was odd to see them addressed to a foreign judge. The mix of aromas surrounding the decision included a whiff of forum shopping.

And yet.

There was a sound legal reason for Phelan to be addressing American practices and policies. The case concerned a 2002 agreement between the United States and Canada on the treatment of people fleeing persecution from other places, and the agreement itself requires compliance with international conventions on refugees and torture.

Under the deal, which became effective three years ago this month, people from other countries entering Canada from the United States by land could no longer ask for asylum, on the theory that they should have done so in the United States. (The agreement works in reverse, too, but most refugee traffic moves north.)

But the deal, known as the Safe Third Country Agreement, sets conditions based on the international conventions, and Phelan said the United States had in recent years not lived up to them.

Phelan declared the 2002 agreement invalid. *NYT*

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2007

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Opposition parties join Pakistan poll

ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN—THE TWO MAIN OPposition parties led by Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif said they would participate in Jan. 8 parliamentary elections, despite deep misgivings about whether the vote could be free and fair.

The move came as an opposition call to boycott the elections foundered Sunday.

Sharif, the former prime minister who returned from exile two weeks ago but has been barred from running himself, would marshal his party to participate in elections, Ahsan Iqbal, a party spokesperson said.

Sharif had called for a boycott of the election to protest the continued rule of Pakistan's president, Pervez Musharraf, who imposed a state of emergency on Nov. 3, suspending the constitution and dismissing the Supreme Court. But when Bhutto, also a former prime minister, made it clear that her party would run, Sharif could not afford to stay out of the race, Iqbal said.

The parties that will participate say they are doing so "under protest," and that they will mount a campaign against unfair election conditions and the government's efforts to return a parliament and government favorable to Musharraf.

The participation of the main opposition parties would grant some credibility to Musharraf. Opposition groups that support a boycott argue that fair elections would be impossible with the country still under emergency rule, the news media muzzled, and a pro-Musharraf caretaker government, election commission and newly appointed Supreme Court in place.

Bhutto said her Pakistan Peoples Party would participate in the elections to force them open and prevent the pro-Musharraf coalition from winning a majority.

"We believe it is important to take part under protest because by boycotting we play into the hands of Musharraf," she said in a telephone interview on Sunday from her home in the United Arab Emirates, where she spent the weekend.

Musharraf has said he will lift emergency rule on Sunday and has pledged to hold "fair and free elections according to the constitution."

Meanwhile, Sharif's marshaling of his supporters represents a strong challenge to Musharraf. Sharif leads a faction of the Pakistan Muslim League and his base of support is Punjab, Pakistan's most populous province and the most important in the electoral college. His participation is likely to cut into the strength of the bloc of the Pakistan Muslim League that supports Musharraf.

The opposition parties have been drawing up a list of demands for the government to address to ensure free and fair elections. Those are likely to include appointing a neutral caretaker government and election commission. *NYT*

Brave effort for an oil spill that won't be contained

SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA—THOUSANDS OF fishermen, soldiers and volunteers struggled on Sunday to clean up an oil spill that has caused an environmental disaster in South Korea. It has blackened once-scenic beaches, coated birds and oysters in sludge and driven away tourists with its stomach-churning stench.

But the 7,000 people mobilized were too few to clean up the oil slick, which has been washing up since Saturday along a 19-kilometer-long shoreline of the nation's west coast. Strong tides, which dragged the sludge before pushing it ashore again, hampered the cleanup operations by villagers, who complained of headaches and nausea from the stench.

The oil spill occurred Friday when the steel wire linking a tugboat to a barge carrying a crane snapped in stormy seas. The barge lurched toward the Hebei Spirit, a Hong Kong-registered oil tanker, which was at anchor, and punched three holes into its hull.

The spill came a week after the South Korean port town of Yosu won the right to be the host in 2012 for an international event called Expo. Bidding for the event, South Korea championed the theme of "the living ocean and coast," a slogan it hoped would bolster environmental awareness in Asia.

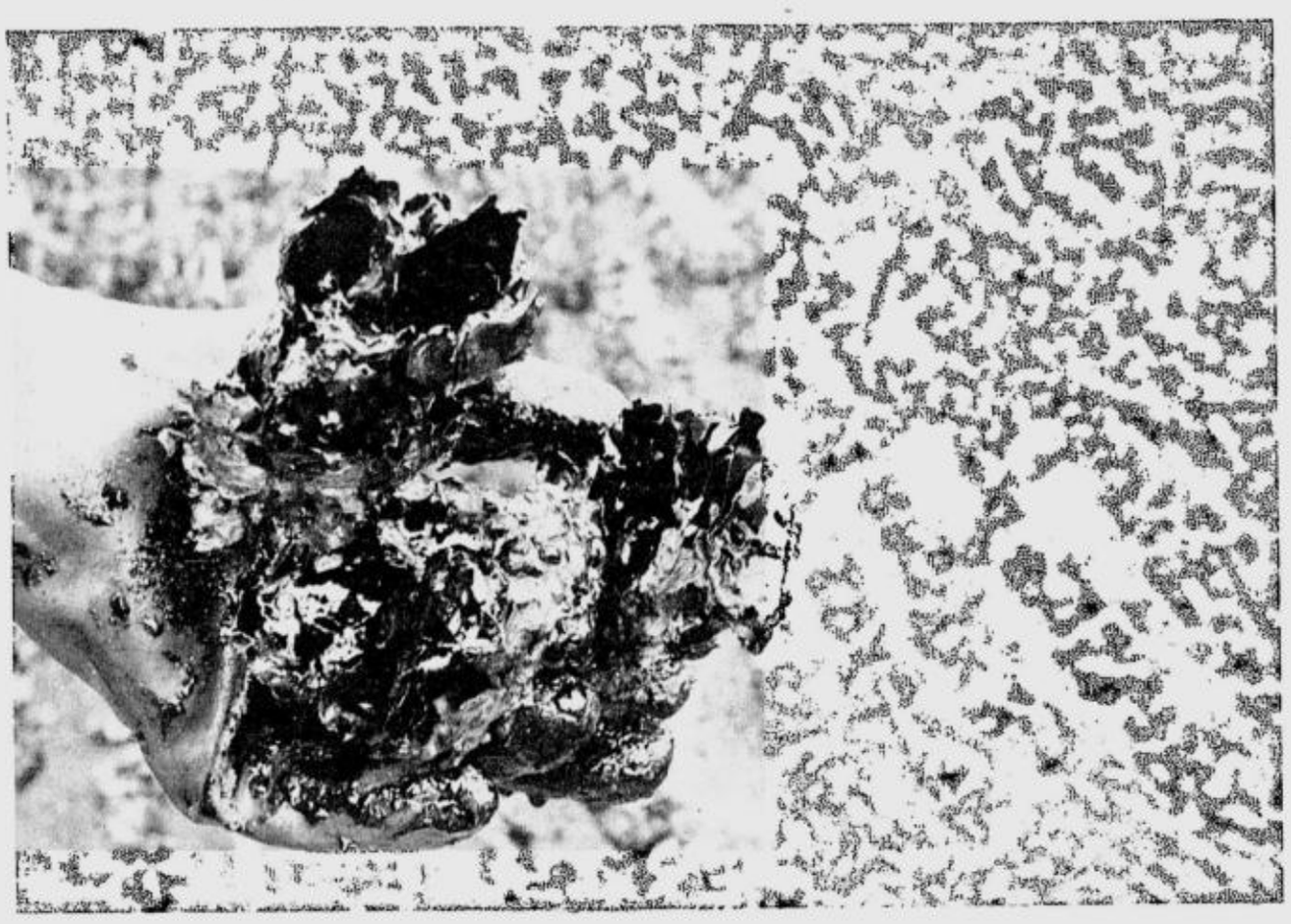
The size of the oil spill was about one-fourth that of the 260,000 barrels, or 11 million gallons, leaked into Prince William Sound off Alaska from the Exxon Valdez in 1989. It was twice as big as a spill off South Korea in 1995 that cost $101 million in damages to fishermen and required a cleanup operation that took months.

By Sunday, it became clear to local residents that they were battling an environmental disaster. The tidal flats near Taean County, about 152 km southwest of Seoul, are home to rich wildlife, oysters and fish farms, and a national park. Each year, millions of tourists flock there to bathe in the summer or watch migrating birds stop to feed in the muddy flats teeming with clams. About 64,000 people live in Taean.

The provincial government appealed to people to donate used clothes for soldiers who were collecting the sludge in the freezing cold.

The central government declared a state of disaster, which makes it easier for regional governments to mobilize personnel and equipment.

Neither ship involved in the spill was in danger of sinking, and there were no casualties. But the tanker spilled an estimated 10.6 million liters, of crude oil before the last of the three holes was plugged Sunday. *NYT*



An oyster farmer holds his oysters covered with crude oil on Shinduri beach in Taean, west of Seoul, South Korea, on Dec. 10. AP

Shuttle launch delayed until January

CAPE CANAVERAL, FLA.—NASA ON SUNDAY delayed the launching of the space shuttle Atlantis until at least Jan. 2 to give engineers time to diagnose and fix its balky fuel tank sensors.

The flight, originally scheduled for Thursday and then rescheduled for Sunday, was given its latest postponement when one of four critical sensors in the liquid hydrogen section of the external tank malfunctioned during early morning fueling.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration officials said at a news conference that technicians would try to isolate and repair the problem while the Atlantis stayed on its launching pad here at the Kennedy Space Center. If the issue requires a rolling back of the shuttle to its hangar for repairs, the new launching date probably would slip later into January, said LeRoy Cain, head of the mission management team.

"We have a lot of options before we determine if we have to roll back," Cain said.

William Gerstenmaier, director of space flight for the agency, said there was enough margin in next year's launching plans that a January flight by the Atlantis should not interfere with another shuttle mission scheduled for February.

The main mission for the Atlantis and its crew of seven is to deliver and install a large European science laboratory on the International Space Station. Nasa had until Dec. 14 to see the shuttle off before its last launching window of the year would close. *NYT*

Canada's worst serial killing: Pig farmer found guilty of killing prostitutes

VANCOUVER, CANADA—PIG farmer Robert "Willy" Pickton was found guilty Sunday of second-degree murder in the deaths of six women, in Canada's worst serial killings.

The 10-month trial and unanimous jury verdict dealt only with six of 26 murder charges against the 58-year-old, who was convicted in the deaths of Marnie Frey, Sereena Abotsway, Mona Wilson, Andrea Joesbury, Brenda Ann Wolfe and Georgina Faith Papin.

Pickton faces a life sentence for his conviction on the six second-degree murder charges. Pickton returns to court for sentencing on Tuesday.

A second trial on the remaining 20 murder charges he faces gets underway on Jan. 17.

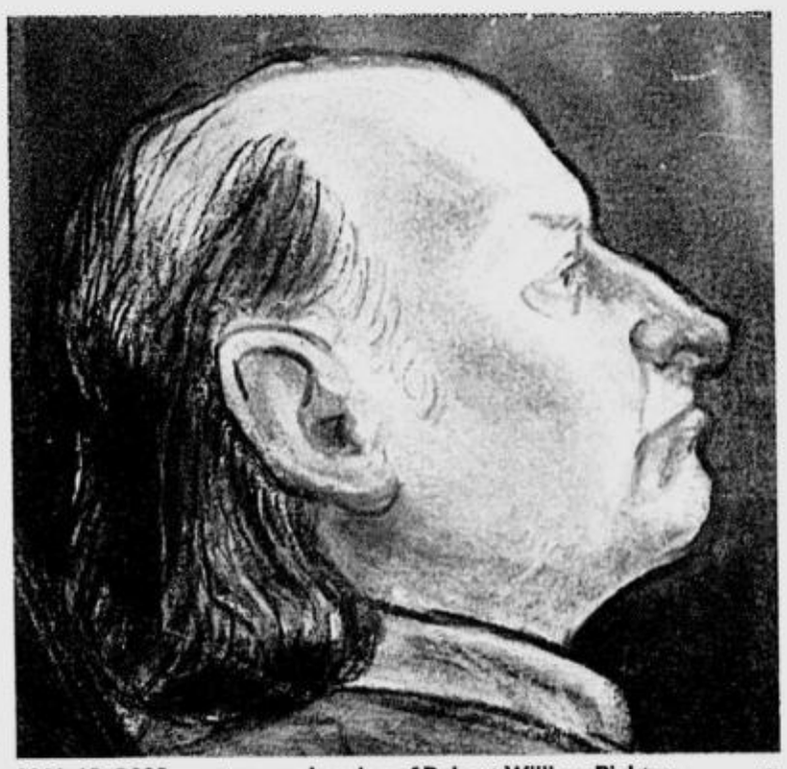
Prosecutors had argued throughout his trial that Pickton picked up drug-addicted prostitutes from Vancouver's squalid Downtown Eastside, killed them, butchered them and disposed of their bodies by feeding them to pigs or taking them to a rendering plant.

Pickton's defense team did not dispute that the women's body parts, DNA or belongings were found on his farm.

But they argued that many other people frequented the pig farm, and also that Pickton was not intelligent enough to plan, execute and conceal the murders.

After the verdict, defense lawyer Peter Ritchie told reporters that the fact that the jury did not find Pickton guilty of first-degree murder means that they "weren't satisfied he (alone) committed the murders. You can draw that from the convictions."

But Crown counsel Stan Lowe hailed the verdicts as a "a confirmation of our assessment of the evidence in this case. Mr. Pickton murdered these women."



JAN. 13, 2003 courtroom drawing of Robert William Pickton. AFP

An avalanche of ghastly evidence was presented at the trial, while more than 100 witnesses took the stand.

Police testified about finding three severed heads and other body parts in a freezer and buckets on Pickton's area pig farm, human bones beneath a pig pen, and a gun with a dildo over its muzzle holding traces of DNA from Pickton and one of the women.

One prosecution witness testified in court that she saw Pickton butcher a woman hanging on a meat hook at his farm.

Another witness said Pickton had once described to him how he used handcuffs, a wire and a belt to kill prostitutes, then butchered them and disposed of their bodies.

Pickton, an angular man with lank grey hair who has been in jail since his arrest in February 2002, slumped almost motionless throughout the trial.

He appeared slightly anxious just before the jury's verdict as sheriffs ushered him into the court in the suburb of New Westminster.

Screams of "No!" from friends and relatives of the victims rang through the small dark courtroom as the jury foreperson first read out verdicts of "not guilty" of first-degree murder.

Then, almost immediately, people in the public gallery sobbed and hugged each other as the panel of seven men and five women delivered a "guilty" verdict on the lesser offences of second-degree murder.

Both first and second-degree convictions in Canada mean the convicted person intended to kill. Second-degree, however, means the jury was not convinced the murders were deliberate and planned.

Rick Frey, father of Marnie, criticized the verdict, telling AFP: "You don't kill six people over a period of time and there's no premeditated intent."

But he said the ruling was better than an acquittal. "It could have been better, but it could have been a hell of a lot worse."

After the verdict was read, dozens thronged in the square to light candles in memory of the victims, most of whom were known drug addicts who had vanished between the late 1970s and 2002 from the sex strolls of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

A police task force formed in 2001 investigated Pickton's farm after police arrested him in an unrelated investigation into illegal guns.

Murray Watson, foster brother of one of victims named in the second trial, told the public broadcaster CBC that Sunday's verdict was "good," but said he was eager for convictions in the other cases as well.

"We need a second trial," he said. "There won't be no closure with the families if we don't have that second trial." *AFP*

World's most deadly serial killers

A LIST OF SOME OF THE world's most notorious serial killers in recent history:

- Alexander Pichushkin, Russia. Nicknamed the "Chessboard murderer," he was sentenced in October to life in prison for killing 48 people. The supermarket worker said he felt like God as he decided whether his victims should live or die, and hoped to put a coin on every square of a 64-square chessboard for each of his victims.
- Pedro Alonso Lopez, Colombia. Nicknamed the "Monster of the Andes," he was suspected of killing 300 people in Colombia, Ecuador and Peru. He was convicted in 1980 on 57 charges.
- Harold Shipman, Britain. The Manchester, England, doctor was sentenced to 15 life terms for murdering elderly and middle-aged female patients between March 1995 and July 1998. A final report in 2005 said the so-called "Dr. Death" probably killed 250 people in all, starting when he began practicing medicine. Shipman committed suicide in January 2004.
- Hu Wanlin, China. Arrested in January 1999 on suspicion of causing the deaths of 146 people. A self-proclaimed healer and an ex-convict, he called himself a doctor with magical healing powers. It is unclear how he caused the deaths.
- Luis Alfredo Gavarito, Colombia. In 1999, Gavarito confessed to the murders of 140 people.
- Donald Henry Gaskins, United States. Executed in 1991 for a series of murders. Gaskins likely killed more than 100 people.
- Javed Iqbal, Pakistan. Iqbal was sentenced to death in 2000 for murdering and mutilating 100 children.
- Henry Lee Lucas, United States. Lucas was sentenced to death for the 1979 murder of an unidentified hitchhiker. In the 1980s, he admitted to hundreds of killings but later recanted and his death sentence was commuted to life in prison.
- Delfina and Maria de Jesus Gonzales, Mexico. Owners of a brothel, the sisters were sentenced to 40 years in prison in 1964 for killing 80 women and at least 11 men.
- Andrei Chikatilo, Russia. Known as the "Rostov Ripper", Chikatilo was convicted of 52 murders in 1992, having confessed to 55 and "possibly more."
- Anatoly Onoprienko, Ukraine. During a five-year reign of terror up to 1996, Onoprienko killed 52 people. He was sentenced to death in 1999.
- Gary Leon Ridgway, United States. Ridgway, a former truck painter, was dubbed the "Green River Killer" for the location where he dumped several bodies. He killed 48 prostitutes, runaways and drug addicts during a murder spree that stunned the Seattle area. He was sentenced to life in prison without parole in 2003 after agreeing to help police find the bodies.
- Theodore "Ted" Bundy, United States. Bundy admitted to killing 36 young women and was also linked to murders in the states of Washington, Oregon, Utah and Colorado. He once bragged he killed at least 100 women and was executed in 1989.
- John Wayne Gacy, United States. Arrested in 1978, he killed 33 young men and boys, burying most of their bodies in a crawl space beneath his house. Executed in May 1994.
- Jeffrey Dahmer, United States. Sentenced to several life terms in 1992 for the murders of 17 young men and boys in a 13-year rampage of dismemberment and cannibalism. He was killed in prison in November 1994. *Reuters*

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24th SEA GAMES 6-15 DECEMBER 2007 NAKHON RATCHASIMA THAILAND

Scion of RP Olympian fastest man in the pool

MIGUEL Molina forges ahead of Indonesia's Billy Arfianto in the final stretch of the 200m breaststroke for his third gold. RAFFY LERMA

By Musong R. Castillo

NAKHON RATCHASIMA, THAILAND—DANIEL COAKley sank the Southeast Asian Games mark in the 50-meter freestyle and Miguel Molina bagged a third gold that climaxed a bountiful day for the Filipinos in the pool Monday night.

Ryan Arabejo scooped up his second gold in these Games by ruling the 200 backstroke as the Filipinos surpassed their 2005 effort in Los Baños, Laguna, going into the final day of action on Tuesday at His Majesty the King's 80th Nirth Anniversary pool here.

Coakley, the 17-year-old great grandson of two-time Olympic medalist Teofilo Yldefonso, bagged the Philippines' third gold for the night by clocking 22.80 seconds, shading the 22.98, established in the 2005 Manila Games by Thailand's Arwut Chainapasaen.

Chainapasaen settled for the silver this time.

Chainapasaen, the 26-year-old Thai who won the Asian Indoor gold this year and the pre-meet favorite, nipped Singapore's Russell Ong, who clocked 23.51.

Born and raised in Hawaii, Coakley blitzed the field to crown himself the Games' fastest man in the pool.

His victory came minutes after Arabejo struck again and Molina repeated the hat-trick he pulled off in 2005.

"They are inspired because they gave a good account of themselves in the relay (Sunday night) where we almost won the gold medal," said national swimming president Mark Joseph.

Molina won the gold in the 400 and 200 individual medley as well as a silver in the relay on Friday and Saturday.

Molina and Coakley were in the 4x100 freestyle relay team that finished a strong second to Singapore Sunday night. The quartet improved on the Philippines bronze-medal finish in 2005.

Arabejo, who also won the 200 backstroke on Saturday, clocked 15 minutes and 53.16 seconds in winning the 1,500 freestyle over Thailand's Tharnnawat Worakiart (15:58.92) and Singapore's Marcus Cheah (16:07.99).

A high school student at Kapalua in Hawaii, Coakley also became the fourth Filipino to make it to next year's Beijing Olympics after Molina, Arabejo and James Walsh.

Walsh, who was also in the 400 relay team with Kendrick Uy, will see action in the 200 butterfly.

"The adrenaline of the team is still flowing up until this point and we hope to win at least one more gold (at the close of swimming competitions Tuesday)," Joseph said.

Molina, who swims for the University of California, vies in his final event on Tuesday in the 200 freestyle, an event he narrowly failed to win at the Trace Aquatic Center in Los Baños, Laguna, two years ago.

"He's raring to go," Joseph said of Molina. "We will go for one more."

Pascua, Ilustre keep track of Thai volleybelles

By Musong R. Castillo

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—THE Philippine tandem of Diane Pascua and Heidi Ilustre won a third straight match Monday and stayed in second place behind equally unbeaten Thailand in pool B of beach volleyball action at the 24th Southeast Asian Games.

Ilustre-Pascua, Filipino-Americans being honed for the 2008 Beijing Olympics, overwhelmed the Laotian pair of Davy Sammaving and Metta Vongnalath, 21-5, 21-5, at His Majesty the King's 80th Birth Anniversary court here.

While Pascua and Ilustre kept the Thai pair of Yupa Phokongploy and Kulna Kamoltip, who holds a 4-0 record, within reach, Michelle Laborte and Michella Carolino took a first loss in three games on Sunday, 13-21, 11-21, to Thais Usa Tenpaksee and Jarunee Sannok.

The Tenpaksee-Sannok combine improved to 3-0 in Pool A while the Laborte-Carolino duo fell to 2-1.

Pascua and Ilustre have now dropped a total of 48 points counting their 21-11, 21-11 beating of the Malaysian pair of Teng Kee Luk and Isw Ari Manokharan on Saturday.

In billiards, former double World Pool champ Ronnie Alcano ripped Thailand's Tepwin Arunnath, 9-2, to advance to the 8-ball quarterfinals at the Sima Thani Hall.

Alcano was the only Filipino representative in the singles after Dennis Orcollo failed to make the trip because of a viral infection.

In cycling, Jan Paul Morales won the bronze medal in the 1-km time trial, clocking 1-minute and 7.244 seconds. It was a Malaysian 1-2 in the event as Mohd Rizal Tisin won the gold after timing 1:05.980 and Mohd Azizulhasni captured the silver at 1:06.645.

Apryl Eppinger finished fifth in the women's 500-meter cycling time trial, clocking 39.322 seconds with a top speed of 45.775 kph at the modern velodrome.

Uyun Muzizah won the gold with a time of 36.453 with Thailand's Jutatip Maneephan second in 36.492 and Malaysia's Fatehah Mustapa third in 37.185.

In fencing, Team Philippines settled for the silver medal after getting dumped by Vietnam, 26-45, in the women's saber finals.

The men's foil squad also suffered the same fate after being ripped by Thailand, 27-43, in their own gold medal match.

In tennis, Eric Taino joined Cecil Mamiit in the men's singles quarterfinals, downing Mihn Quan Do of Vietnam, 6-2, 6-1, before Czarina Mae Arevalo took the door in women's play, losing 1-6, 3-6 to No. 2 seed Nudnida Luangnam of Thailand.

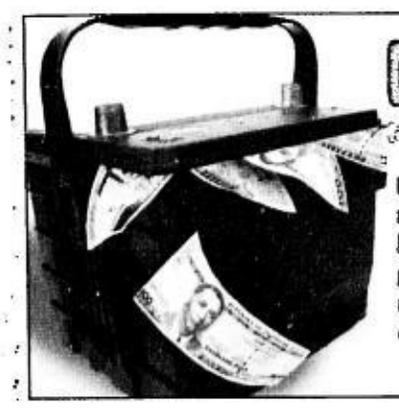
The Mamiit-Dy mixed doubles team also advanced after a 6-2, 7-5 win over the Indon team of veteran Wynne Adiati Prakusya and Christopher Benjamin Rungkat.

ARCHER Amaya Paz (center) goes up against Singapore's Lee Bee Teng (right) in the quarterfinals today after hurdling Laos' Viengkeo Syhalath in the elimination round of the women's individual compound, 115-80. RAFFY LERMA

Nestlé MILO The Official Energy Drink of the Philippine Team
24th SEA GAMES 6-15 DECEMBER 2007 NAKHON RATCHASIMA THAILAND

SEA GAMES Medal Tally

COUNTRY	G	S	B				
Thailand	79	74	59	Indonesia	18	26	34
Vietnam	41	22	46	Myanmar	3	12	20
Singapore	32	25	22	Laos	2	1	13
Malaysia	24	21	45	Cambodia	1	2	5
Philippines	22	30	53	Brunei	0	1	1
				Timor Leste	0	0	0



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RP finalists rise to 10 in boxing

By Recah Trinidad

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—THREE FEMALE Filipino fighters registered resounding victories in a brilliant charge Monday that made it a total of ten finalists for the Philippine team that's being pressed against the ropes by host Thailand in their grim battle for boxing supremacy.

Light flyweight Alice Kate Aparri, light bantamweight Annalisa Cruz and lightweight Mitchel Martinez, all golden winners in Bacolod City two years ago, marched hand-in-hand to the gold-medal round in overwhelming fashion to the awe of a pro-Thai crowd at the Meaungpug Municipal Gymnasium.

It was all systems go for the RP team as Aparri blasted Vietnan's Nguyen Thi Hoa, 13-2, Cruz ousted Thia Ngan Hang Le (RSC outscored, 18-3), before Martinez punctuated the 3-for-3 surge with a shutout of Laotian Manivone Phimsomphon, 15-0 (RSCO).

There was hushed cheering in the RP camp though as Thai women fighters, as rugged and sharp as the Pinay punchers, also barreled into the finals in similar sensational fashion.

Together with seven RP fighters who formally moved into the finals Sunday, the three Filipinos who triumphed yesterday will all be clashing for the gold medal against the Thais who have not lost a single bout after four days of boxing action.

Four more RP boxers—bantamweight Junel Cantancio, lightweight Jogen Ladon, light flyweight Albert Pabila and light heavyweight Mariano Tabangcora—see action in the extended semifinal round today and could make it a total of 14 finalists for the Philippines that has already lost three fighters.

The RP women boxers are favored to land the gold but their male counterparts, part of the so-called RP Team B, will have to surpass themselves if they are to win their final assignments and raise the sagging hopes of the entire Philippine delegation.

"We're still on target and we hope to win as many gold medals as possible," said Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines president Manny Lopez.

So far, the boxing tournament has not been tainted with questionable scoring which had been the bane of past regional competitions when the international amateur boxing body was still ruled by the infamous Anwar Chowdry of Pakistan.

But Filipino boxers, faced with the best fighters from host Thailand, cannot rely solely on fair and honest officiating if they are to retain the overall championship won in the 2005 edition of the SEA Games hosted by the Philippines.

LIGHT bantamweight Annalisa Cruz (right) pummels Vietnam's Thi Ngan Hang Le in Monday's semifinal bout to enter the finals of the SEA Games boxing competition. RAFFY LERMA

SEAG five wants stronger tournament

GAMES WEDNESDAY
1 p.m.—Philippines vs Malaysia (W)
5 p.m.—Philippines vs Malaysia (M)

By Musong R. Castillo

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—WITH THE imminent reaffirmation of the Philippines as king of Southeast Asian basketball, PBL commissioner Chino Trinidad said that his league has done its job and would turn over the responsibility to another group.

"We've validated the point that the Philippines is unbeatable in men's basketball in the region," Trinidad said on Monday, during a break in 24th Southeast Asian Games play for the Filipinos. "We know that our (PBL) standard is far from that of the region.

"It's time we give this (Southeast Asian Games) responsibility to some other group and for us to be given a new responsibility for a higher challenge."

Trinidad, also the acting team manager of the RP five, said the PBL is ready to "show that we can play beyond the standards that we showed here in Thailand."

He declined to say what tournament the national team culled from PBL players could focus its resources on, saying that job belongs to the Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas.

"It could be anything as long as the task is higher because the essence of competition is to challenge yourself," Trinidad said.

"People may laugh at me for what I am saying, but ambition has always been the start of something."

Meanwhile, the RP five, bankrolled by Harbour Centre owner Mikee Romero, will leave much of their equipment to the Cambodian national team, whose appearance here has been sponsored by the organizing Thailand Sports Authority.

Shoes, practice jersey, gym bags and even the balls the Philippine team used for practice will be given to the Cambodians, some of whom played in the basketball tournament using badminton and tennis shoes.

The Filipinos tore the Cambodians to shreds, 136-82, in their debut, before plastering Indonesia, 75-49 at the Keelapirom Stadium here. They need to win two more games to put away the championship.

SUPER SUBSTITUTE: Anthony Fernando.

Fiery Fernando shoots 69 as RP golfers take control

By Musong R. Castillo

BONANZA RANCH KHAOYAI—AN ace for an ace.

Anthony Fernando played like the original Philippine team spearhead he replaced, firing a three-under-par 69 and boosting the Filipinos to the first-round lead with a 209 total at the 24th Southeast Asian Games.

Jonel Ababa and Ferdinand Aunzo contributed 70s in a brilliant day at the long Bonanza course here for the Filipinos, who had to throw away a respectable 74 by Mark Fernando.

The RP squad led Indonesia by one shot and Thailand, champion at the recent Putra Cup, by five.

Fernando, the 26-year-old reigning RP Amateur champion who made it to the SEAG after amateur ace Jay Bayron opted to turn pro, gunned down four birdies in the windy conditions.

Andik Mauludin took the individual lead with a 68 and lifted the Indonesians, who drew 71s from Hardjito and Yuniarto Bennita, to a 210 total.

The Thais could not get going and tallied only 214 for fourth, a rung behind the Malaysians who pooled 212 on the strength of A.M. Nazari's 69.

K. Aphibarmrat and Varut Chomchalam shot 71s and either the 72s of T. Khrongpa and Pipatpong Naewsuk counted for Thailand's output.

The Filipinos are defending the team gold they won at The Country Club in Laguna in 2005. Juvic Pagunsan made it a sweep for the RP squad by easily topping individual play.

"The thing going for us is that (the RP team) is a closely knit group," nonplaying skipper Caloy Coscoluella said. "There are no stars in this team, only players who want to play and win this event for the country.

Tied for second with Malaysia's Nazari, Anthony Fernando's only bogey came on the par-5 second, where he hit his second shot from 240 yards to the right, then missed the green.

Ababa, the first winner of the National Caddies Open, bogeyed the two par-5s in the front nine off duck-hook drives before coming home with a 33.

Aunzo had three birdies and a bogey.

Apart from Nazari's 69, Malaysia drew a 71 from Amli Mohayadeen and a 72 from Edmund Au.

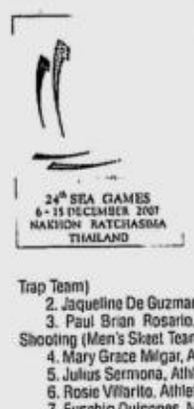
The 54-hole women's play starts Tuesday with the Philippines fielding a band-aid team following the failure of spearheads Jayvie Agojo and Dottie Ardina to get reprieves from their respective schools in the United States.

Veteran Anya Tanpinco is the team's spearhead with the long-hitting Regina de Guzman and Chihiro Ikeda taking the places of Agojo and Ardina. Only the top two of three scores will count towards the team total.

Filipino medalists
(As of Dec. 10, 2007)

GOLD

1. Jooy Barba, Mountain Bike (Men's Downhill)
2. Ryan Arabejo, Swimming (Men's 200m Back)
3. Miguel Molina, Swimming (Men's 400m Individual Medley)
4. Rene Herrera, Athletics (Men's 3000m Steeplechase)
5. Arniel Ferrera, Athletics (Men's Hammer Throw)
6. Benjamin Tolentino Jr. and Jose Rodriguez, Rowing (Men's Double Sculls)
7. Ryan Mendoza, Triathlon (Men's Duathlon)
8. Marestella Torres, Athletics (Women's Long Jump)
9. Emmanuel Reyes and Maira Rosete, Dance Sport (Standard Quickstep)
10. E.J Reyes and M. Rosete, Dance Sport, (Standard Tango)
11. Michelle Bruzola, Fencing (Women's Individual Epee)
12. Emerson Segui, Fencing (Men's Individual Foil)
13. Antonio Gabica and Marlon Manalo, Billiards and Snooker (Men's 9-Ball Doubles)
14. Miguel Molina, Swimming (Men's 200m Indiv. Medley)
15. B. Tolentino, Rowing (Men's Lightweight Singles Sculls)
16. Rubilen Amit, Billiards (Women's 9-Ball Pool Singles)
17. Mariane Mariano, Wushu (Women's Under 60kg)
18. Willy Wang, Wushu (Men's Nanquan, 3 events combined)
19. Henry Dagmil, Athletics (Men's Long Jump)
20. Daniel Coakley, Swimming (Men's 50m Free)
21. Miguel Molina, Swimming (Men's 200m Breast)
22. Ryan Arabejo, Swimming (Men's 1500m Free)



SILVER

1. Eric Ang, Carag Carlos and Jethro Dionisio, Shooting (Men's Trap Team)
2. Jaqueline De Guzman, Shooting (Women's Skeet)
3. Paul Brian Rosario, Patricio Bernardo and Gabriel Tong, Shooting (Men's Skeet Team)
4. Mary Grace Migar, Athletics (Women's 400m Hurdles)
5. Julius Sermona, Athletics (Men's 500m)
6. Rosie Villarito, Athletics (Women's Javelin Throw)
7. Eusebio Quinones, Mountain Bike (Men's Cross Country)
8. Alvin Amposta and Nestor Cordova, Rowing (Men's Lightweight Double Sculls)
9. Marcus Valda, Wrestling (Men's Freestyle 84kg)
10. Midel Dique, Athletics (Men's 800m)
11. Harlene Orendain, Fencing (Women's Individual Epee)
12. Gemma Silverio, Wrestling (Women's Freestyle 59kg)
13. Alven Aragon, Wrestling (Men's Freestyle 74kg)
14. Jimmy Angana , Wrestling (Men's Freestyle 66kg)
15. Nida Cordova and Midelle Gabiligno, Rowing (Women's Double Sculls)
16. George Vilog, Triathlon (Men's Event)
17. Alessandra Araullo, Triathon (Women's Event)
18. Reyes and Rosete, Dance Sport (Standard Viennese Waltz)
19. Reyes and Rosete, Dance Sport (Standard Slow Foxtrot)
20. John Erolle Melencio and Dearlie Gerodias, Dance Sport (Latin American Jive)
21. J. Melencio and D. Gerodias, Dance Sport (Latin American Paso Doble)
22. Walbert Mendoza, Fencing (Men's Individual Sabre)
23. James Walsh, Swimming (Men's 100m Butterfly)
24. Miguel Molina, Daniel Coakley, Kendrick Uy and James Walsh, Swimming (Men's 4x100m Freestyle Relay)
25. Julius Sermona, Athletics (Men's 1000m)
26. Mary Jane Estmar, Wushu (Women's Under 52 kg)
27. Benjie Rivera, Wushu (Men's Under 56 kg)
28. Mark Denver Atienza, Rolando Canlas Jr., Ramil Endriano and Emerson Segui, Fencing (Men's Team Foil)
29. Mary Rose Alfonso, Joanna Franquelli, Ma. Wendelyn Mendoza, Lenita Oladoy, Fencing (Women's Team Sabre)

BRONZE

1. Emprito Concepcion, Shooting (Men's 10m Air Rifle)
2. Men's Hoop, Sepak Takraw
3. Women's Hoop, Sepak Takraw
4. Eliezer Sunang, Athletics (Men's Shot Put)
5. Jobert Delicano, Athletics (Men's Triple Jump)
6. Nino Surban, Mountain Bike (Men's Cross Country)
7. Marites Bitbit, Mountain Bike (Women's Cross Country)
8. Maribel Jamilora, Wrestling (Women's Freestyle 48kg)
9. Ma. Cristina Vergara, Wrestling (Women's Freestyle 51kg)
10. Clotheide Nillas and Johnalyn Pedrita, Rowing (Women's Lightweight Double Sculls)
11. Frederick Taino and Cecil Mamiit, Tennis (Men's Team)
12. Denise Dy and Diane Matias, Tennis (Women's Team)
13. August Benedicto, Triathlon (Men's Duathlon)
14. Analiza Dysangco, Triathlon (Women's Duathlon)
15. Reyes and Rosete, Dance Sport (Standard Waltz)
16. Reynato Rener Mercado and Judith Anne Melencio, Dance Sport (Latin American Cha Cha Cha)
17. Rolando Canlas Jr., Fencing (Men's Individual Foil)
18. Joanna Franquelli, Fencing (Women's Individual Sabre)
19. Arnold Villarubie, Athletics (Men's Decathlon)
20. Junrey Bano, Julius Felicisimo Nierras Jr., Rodrigo Tanuan Jr. and Emie Candelario, Athletics (Men's 4x400 Relay)
21. Kendrick Uy, Swimming (Men's 100m Free)
22. Jaclyn Pangilinan, Swimming (Women's 100m Breast)
23. Nicole Santiago, Jaclyn Pangilinan, Georgina Gandionco and Erica Totten, Swimming (Women's 4x100m Freestyle Relay)
24. Eduardo Buenavista, Athletics (Men's Marathon)
25. Jho Ann Banayag, Athletics (Women's Marathon)
26. Jose Rodriguez, Rowing (Men's Single Sculls)
27. Arland Macasieb, Triathlon (Men)
28. Maria Meliza Lucas, Triathlon (Women)
29. Hidilyn Diaz, Weightlifting (Women's 58 kg)
30. Margarito Angana, Wrestling (Men's Freestyle 55 kg)
31. Daniel Pakantac, Wushu (Men's Taijiquan-2 events)
32. Janice Hung, Wushu (Women's Taijiquan-2 events)
33. Bill Vicente Vicera, Boxing (Men's Pin 45kg)
34. M. Bitbit, Road Cycling (Women's Individual Time Trial)
35. J. Melencio and D. Gerodias, Dance Sport (Latin American Samba)
36. Claro Roland, Muay Thai (Flyweight 51 kg)
37. Rene Catalan, Wushu (Men's Under 52 kg)
38. Michelle Mangenido and Veona Tessa Nuestro (tie), Fencing (Women's Individual Foil)
39. Edmon Velez, Fencing (Men's Individual Sabre)
40. Ryan Arabejo, Swimming (Men's 400m Freestyle)
41. Reynato Rener Mercado and Judith Anne Melencio, Dance Sport (Latin American Cha Cha Cha)
42. Robert Andrew Garcia, Squash (Men's Singles)
43. Roque Mana-ay Jr., Wrestling (Men's Freestyle 60kg)
44. Michelle Bruzola, Ma. del Carmen Galvez, Mary Catherine Kong and Harlene Orendain, Fencing (Women's Team Epee)
45. Romnick Ghie Pabalate, Muay Thai (Light Fly 48 kg)
46. Jul-Omar Abdulhakim, Pencak Silat (Men's Under 50kg)
47. Emraida Asmad, Pencak Silat (Women's Under 55kg)
48. Laruan Zaldi, Muay Thai (Feather 57kg)
49. Emerson Obiena, Athletics (Men's Pole Vault)
50. Jan Paul Morales, Cycling Track (Men's 1km Time Trial)
51. Jaclyn Pangilinan, Swimming (Women's 200m Breast)
52. Erica Totten, Swimming (Women's 200m Free)
53. Daniel Parantac, Wushu (Men's Taijiquan-2 events)

How RP cagers fared in the Olympics

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

HERE IS A CONTINUATION TO THE list of Filipino basketball Olympians as requested by reader Isabelo Filomeno of Cagayan de Oro City.

In the 1956 Melbourne Olympics, the much-respected Leo Prieto called the shots for the Philippine national team. The country finished seventh, with the United States winning its fourth straight Olympic gold since 1936 when the sport made its Olympic debut in Berlin.

Composing Prieto's team were the fabled Carlos Loyzaga, Ramon Campos Jr., Antonio Genato, captain; Loreto Carbonell, Carlos Badion, Rafael Barretto, Eduardo Lim, Ramon Manulat, Leonardo Marquicias, Mariano Tolentino, Martin Urra and Antonio Villamor. Francis Wilson and Mario Ballesteros were the alternates.

Results in Melbourne: RP d. Thailand, 55-44; RP d. Japan, 76-61; RP lost to US, 53-121; RP lost to Uruguay, 70-79; RP d. France, 65-58; RP lost to Chile, 69-88; RP lost to Bulgaria, 70-80; while RP d. Chile, 75-68.

The other RP Olympic teams:

1960 ROME—Kurt Bachmann, Geronimo Cruz, Alfonso Marquez, Edgardo Pacheco, Carlos Badion, captain; Emilio Achacoso, Narciso Bernardo, Edgardo Ocampo, Constancio Ortiz, Cristobal Ramas, Edgardo Roque and Roberto Yburan. The coach was Arturo "Luli" Rius. No alternate was named.

The Philippines placed 11th while the US won its fifth consecutive basketball title.

Results in Rome: RP lost to Poland, RP d. Spain, 84-82; RP lost to Uruguay, 76-80; RP d. Puerto Rico, 82-80; RP d. Bulgaria by default; RP lost to Hungary, 70-81; RP lost to France, 75-122; RP d. Mexico. 65-64.

1964 TOKYO—Arturo Valenzona, Alfonso Marquez, Edgardo Pacheco, Alberto Reynoso, Elias Tolentino, Engracio Arazas, Narciso Bernardo, Edgardo Ocampo, captain; Manuel Jocson, Felix Flores, Renato Reyes and Edgardo Roque. Valentin Eduque mentored the team while no alternate was named again.

The Filipinos landed sixth and did not qualify. The Americans won—as expected—nailing their sixth straight gold.

Results in Tokyo: RP lost to Mexico, 85-90; RP d. Malaysia, 85-55; RP d. Republic of China, 95-71; RP lost to Indonesia, 66-98; RP lost to Cuba, 69-84; RP lost to Australia, 69-71; RP d. Thailand, 98-71; RP lost to Canada, 63-68; and RP d. South Korea, 90-58.

1968 MEXICO—Robert Jaworski, Orlando Bauzon, Danilo Florencio, Jaime Mariano, Alfonso Marquez, Alberto Reynoso, captain; Elias Tolentino Jr., Edgardo Ocampo, Adriano Papa Jr., Renato Reyes, Rogelio Melencio and Joaquin Rojas. Carlos Loyzaga was the coach, while Freddie Webb and Roehl Nadurata were the alternates.

The Philippines finished 13th, with the US winning its seventh title in a row.

Results in Mexico: RP lost to Italy, 66-91; RP lost to Spain, 79-108; RP lost to US, 75-96; RP lost to Panama, 92-95; RP lost to Puerto Rico, 65-89; RP d. Senegal, 80-68; RP lost to Yugoslavia, 68-89; RP d. Morocco, 86-57; and RP d. South Korea, 66-63.

1972 MUNICH—Freddie Webb, William Adornado, Rosalio Martires, Jaime Mariano, Manuel Paner, Edgardo Ocampo, captain; Narciso Bernardo, Ricardo Cleofas, Danilo Florencio, Rogelio Melencio, Adriano Papa Jr. and Marte Samson. Ignacio Ramos handled the team. There was no alternate.

The Philippines placed 13th but the biggest news was Russia's victory over the US in their battle for the gold.

Results in Munich: RP lost to Poland, 75-90; RP lost to Puerto Rico, 72-92; RP lost to West Germany, 74-93; RP lost to Yugoslavia, 76-117; RP d. Senegal, 68-62; RP lost to Russia, 80-101; RP lost to Italy, 81-101; RP d. Egypt by default, 2-0; and RP d. Japan, 82-73.

* * *

Birthday greetings to my niece, Adelfa "Ipay" Lacuna-Aquino, who is marking another milestone today. Ipay is a longtime resident of Bernadette Circle, Monmouth junction, New Jersey.

Wang, aspiring teacher bag wushu golds

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—WORLD champion Willy Wang defended his Southeast Asian Games nanquan title while Mariane Mariano provided the surprise win Monday in the games' 24th edition at the Kebkanjana CTech gym here.

Wang, who won a world title in Beijing only last month, turned in his lowest score yet of 9.50 in the nangun (Southern-style cudgel) but it was still enough to top the three-event competition with a 28.60 total, .18 points ahead of Vietnam's Khanh Pham Quoc who submitted 28.42.

Mariano beat Myanmar's Khain Yar Zar in the sanshou under -60kg finals, 2-0, for the sport's second gold.

The win surprised many as Mariano joined the RP Team only five months ago. But the 19-year-old Education student at the University of Cordilleras said she expected it.

"*Nu'ng tinalo ko po 'yung* (When I beat) Thai (Ratree Kraekhe) last Sunday, *parang alam ko na pong mananalo ako* (I was already expecting that I would win)," Mariano said. "*Nagpatibay po lalo ng puso ko 'yon* (It strengthened my desire to win)."

Wushu federation chief Julian Camacho had predicted at least three gold medals for his team but was happy with his wards' performance just the same.

"At least, *nakapagbigay para sa bayan* (they contributed to the country)," Camacho said.

Settling for the silver medals were sanshou teammates Mary Jane Estmar and Benjie Rivera in the under-52kg and men's under -56kg, respectively, to go with the bronze-medal efforts of Rene Catalan (under -52kg), Daniel Parantac and Janice Hung in taijiquan two-events on Sunday.

Thw 2-2-3 finish enabled the Filipinos to finish second behind event champion Vietnam (6-3-1).

WILLY Wang lives up to billing RAFFY LERMA

Dagmil leaps to gold, new long jump mark

By Musong R. Castillo

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—**Henry Dagmil fell short of fulfilling a promise on Monday but still shattered the long jump mark that propped up the Philippine athletics contingent in the 24th Southeast Asian Games.**

The 26-year-old Army enlisted man leapt to a distance of 7.87 meters right in his first try as the Philippines won its first gold in two days and fourth overall in track and field at the His Majesty the King's 80th Birth Anniversary Stadium here.

Dagmil's golden effort also sealed another RP sweep in the event, counting Marestela Torres' successful defense of her title on Saturday when she clinched her second straight Games gold in her final try.

Though he promised track and field officials that he would breach the 8-meter mark here, Dagmil's effort came as a fitting prelude to at least two more gold medals the Philippines is expecting to win at the close of action Tuesday.

Dagmil, who set the old mark of 7.81 in Manila two years ago, said that a crucial two-month break in training in the United States hampered his preparations to go beyond eight meters.

"It was the recurrence of an old leg injury," Dagmil, who failed to land a medal in the Doha Asian Games last year, told the INQUIRER in Filipino. "I stopped training for two months in the US and I think that made the difference."

Keeratikorn Janmanee of Thailand bagged the silver with a leap of 7.75, while Mohd Syahrul Amri Mohd Suhaimi of Malaysia scooped up the bronze at 7.48.

Dagmil trained under former Olympic decathlon bronze medalist Chris Huffin earlier this year as part of a program that sent Filipino athletes, Torres included, who are being prepared for the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Athletics has now won four of the Philippine gold medal haul, two of them in record style counting Arniel Ferrera's 60.98-meter heave of the hammer Saturday.

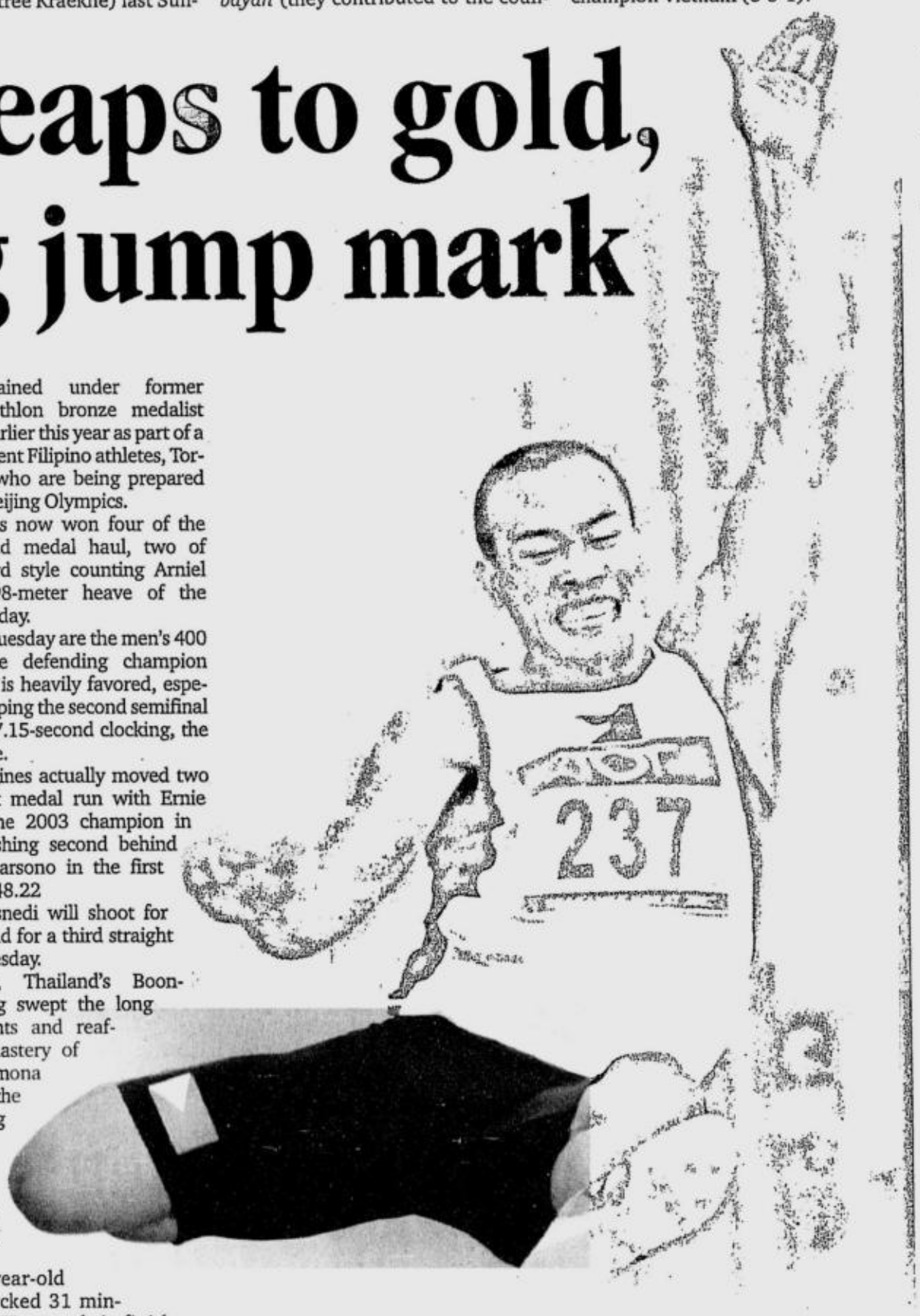
On tap for Tuesday are the men's 400 meters, where defending champion Julius Nierras is heavily favored, especially after topping the second semifinal heat with a 47.15-second clocking, the best by anyone.

The Philippines actually moved two bets into that medal run with Ernie Candelario, the 2003 champion in Vietnam, finishing second behind Achmad Sumarsono in the first semis heat at 48.22

Danilo Fresnedi will shoot for the javelin gold for a third straight SEAG also Tuesday.

Meanwhile, Thailand's Boonthung Srisung swept the long distance events and reaffirmed his mastery of Julius Sermona later, leaving the Filipino eating his dust at the halfway mark of the 10,000-meter final.

The 29-year-old Sermona clocked 31 minutes and 16.75 seconds in finishing second to Srisung, who checked home all alone after timing 30:51.66.



HENRY Dagmil cracks his own SEAG mark with a leap of 7.87 meters right on his first try en route to the gold medal. AP

Pascua-Ilustre unrelenting with third straight win

By Musong R. Castillo

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—THE PHILIPPINE tandem of Diane Pascua and Heidi Ilustre notched their third straight victory, 21-5, 21-5, at the expense of Laotian pair Davy Sammaving and Metta Vongnalath in beach volleyball action of the 24th Southeast Asian Games on Monday at His Majesty the King's 80th Anniversary court here.

On Sunday, the Pasuca-Ilustre tandem also beat the Indon pair of Siam Ayu and Susilowati Efa, 21-10, 21-6.

Pascua-Ilustre, a pairing whose ultimate goal is to make the Beijing Olympics next year, has dropped a total of just 48 points counting its 21-11, 21-11 beating of the Malaysian pair of Teng Kee Luk and Isw Ari Manokharan on Saturday.

Pascua and Ilustre trails the Thai pair of Yupa Phokongploy and Kulna Kamoltip, who holds a 4-0 record.

While Pascua and Ilustre remained unscathed in Pool B, Michelle Laborte and Michelle Carolino absorbed their first loss in three games, bowing to Thais Usa Tenpaksee and Jarunee Sannok, 13-21, 11-21.

Yupa Phokongploy and Kulna Kamoltip remained atop Pool B with a 3-0 record after a 21-7, 21-6 demolition job of the winless Davy Sammaving-Metta Vongnalath pair from Laos.

Carolino-Laborte was 2-1 counting victories over squads from Singapore and Vietnam, but the tandem was just in third spot behind the pacesetting 2-0 cards of its Thai conquerors and Malaysia's Teck hua Luk and Shung Ting Beh.

RONNIE Alcano carries Philippine hopes in men's 9-ball singles event. RAFFY LERMA

Morales settles for bronze behind Malaysian cyclists

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—JAN Paul Morales could only settle for the bronze medal against a pair of Australian-trained Malaysian riders in track cycling's men's 1-kilo Monday at the velodrome of the His Majesty's 80th Birthday Anniversary Main Stadium.

Morales clocked one minute and 7.244 seconds on the 333.33 brand new concrete track, a time that beat his personal best by almost two seconds.

Mohammad Rizal Tisin, who wasn't at the Doha Asian Games in 2006 but was in Australia for intensive training, was timed an amazing 1:05.980 for the gold medal. His compatriot, Mohammad Azizulhasni, booked 1:06.645 for the silver medal.

Morales's bronze was the Philippines' sixth medal in cycling after Joey Barba's gold in men's downhill of mountain bike, Eusebio

Quinones's silver and Nino Surban's bronze in men's crosscountry also of mountain bike and the bronze medals of Nino Surban also in men's crosscountry and Baby Marites Bitbit's in women's crosscountry and road's 30-km individual time trial.

Bert Lina, president of the PhilCycling, cheered the Nationals along with his wife Sylvia. "Not bad," the couple said of the performance that kicked off track hostilities of the 24th Southeast Asian Games.

The kilo and the women's 500 meters are not actually the Filipino riders' forte, but the Malaysians.

Also in the men's kilo, Filipino-American Steve Pelaez warmed his legs and finished fifth in 1:08.670. Apryl Eppinger, the Filipino-Australian on the team, was fifth in the 500 (39.322) topped by Indonesian strongwoman Uyun Muzizah (36.453), Thai Jutatip Maneephan (36.492) and Malaysian Fatehah Mustapa (37.185).

A total of 11 gold medals are staked on the track—six in the men's and five in the women's. The Philippines' Alfie Catalan is the defending gold medalist in the men's individual pursuit.

Filipino boat teams begin medal quest

PATTAYA—THE RP MEN'S AND WOMEN'S teams in the traditional boat race plunge into action Tuesday, hoping to gain a head-start in their bid to keep the titles in the 1000-meter and 500-m events in the 24th Southeast Asian Games.

The opening race at the enormous Mab Prachan Reservoir will determine which of the entries will run in Wednesday's finals in the men's and women's divisions of the longer event.

On Thursday, the preliminary heats—if there are more entries—will be done in the 500-meter event in both men and women's division. The final is set Friday.

"We will defend, we will defend," emphasized Nestor Ilagan, head coach of the RP team, as he, alongside association president Rommuel Celestino and women's team manager Ma. Cristina Ocba, emerged from the Ambassador Hotel to accompany the team to light workouts at the reservoir.

Tough challenge

Ilagan and everybody else in the team believe Myanmar and Indonesia are likely to give the RP bets a tough challenge, but they are also not discounting Vietnam, which they say, is a hard-fighting team capable of pulling off surprises.

The Indonesian team gave the Filipino paddlers a tough fight during the Manila SEA Games. The Indonesians salvaged silver then.

Myanmar, on the other hand, sports some grit in short distance, and is thus expected to give the Philippines a run for its money in the 500m race.

And yet, if only for the four gold medals they won in international tournaments prior to this event, the men's paddlers stand a handsome chance of keeping the titles in both distances.

The opponents, particularly the Thais, have already had a good idea of what to expect from the Filipinos, who topped the International Swan Race which Thailand hosted in September.

Palace names priest PSC executive director

By Marc Anthony Reyes

A REVAMP IS UNDERWAY IN THE PHILIPpine Sports Commission, but it has so far only reached the middle management.

PSC chair Butch Ramirez yesterday announced the appointment of new executive director in Fr. Vicente Lim Uy, SVD, the first priest to be appointed as official in the 17 years of the agency.

"It's a welcome change for us because this is the first time a priest is appointed, we are excited to know the changes he will effect," said Ramirez.

The erstwhile rector and vice president for finance of the University of San Carlos replaced Cesar Pradas, who served for three years in an acting capacity.

Pradas, according to Ramirez, will retain his office, staff and function as PSC planning officer 5.

Fr. Uy was set to arrive yesterday from Cebu City to officially assume office where Ramirez said he is expected to effect major changes in the PSC.

His appointment, said Ramirez, came straight from Malacanang which should supercede any civil service eligibilities.

Fr. Uy's appointment came days after Bacolod-based sportswriter/official Eric Lorerizo was named as replacement to outgoing commissioner Leon Montemayor.

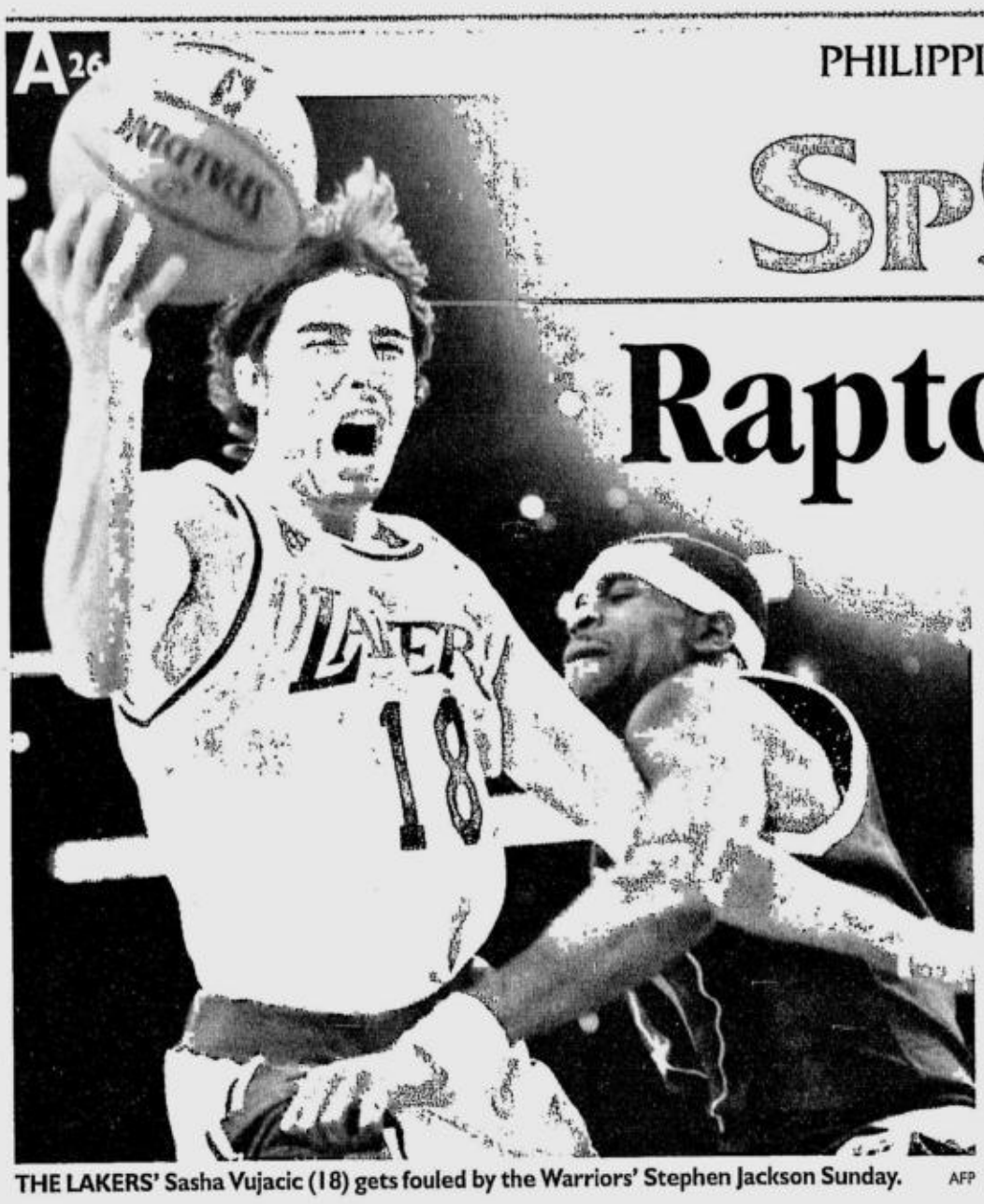
The chair said Loretizo won't have any line function because the commissioners and chair are just policy makers. It's the executive director who runs the daily operations of the PSC.

Meanwhile, Ramirez confirmed the reports that commissioner Joey Mundo, head of the Thailand Southeast Asian Games secretariat, is currently in Kuwait through an invitation of the Kuwaiti shooting team.

The chair said he approved of Mundo's trip "out of good faith" but admitted that the commissioner may have committed "conflict of interest" in pursuing his travel.

RAMIREZ

SPORTS



THE LAKERS' Sasha Vujacic (18) gets fouled by the Warriors' Stephen Jackson Sunday. AFP

Raptors down Rockets

TORONTO—CHRIS BOSH RE-turned from injury to score 21 points and lead the Toronto Raptors to a 93-80 victory over the Houston Rockets on Sunday.

Bosh, who had missed five games with a strained groin, also had 10 rebounds and four blocked shots.

"It just took me a couple minutes," Bosh, who was 1-for-7 in the first half, told reporters.

Houston led 45-34 at the half, but the Raptors held the Rockets to 11 points in the third quarter and went on an 18-3 run to seize a 62-56 lead.

Anthony Parker had nine of his 11 points in the quarter and Bosh contributed seven.

"The thing I love about this team is we stay with it. No matter what happens, we continue to try playing defense, and keep taking those shots," Bosh said.

Toronto forward Kris Humphries then scored 10 of his 16 points in the fourth quarter and pulled down nine rebounds for the game.

Tracy McGrady led Houston with 23 points. Yao Ming added 15 points, six rebounds and three blocked shots.

Miami coach Pat Riley won his 1,200th NBA game as Dwyane Wade had 35 points and 10 assists to help the Heat end a five-game losing streak with a 100-94 road win over the Los Angeles Clippers.

Riley, who has a 1,200-642 record, became the third NBA coach to reach the milestone. Corey Maggette paced the Clippers with 24 points and 12 rebounds.

Brandon Roy put Portland ahead for the last time with a layup as the Trail Blazers beat the Milwaukee Bucks 117-113 in overtime for their third straight win.

Roy, who finished with 26 points, gave Portland a 113-112 lead with 24 seconds left.

LaMarcus Aldridge added 24 points for the Trail Blazers. Mo Williams topped Milwaukee with 33.

Kobe Bryant scored 20 of his game-high 28 points in the second half when the Los Angeles Lakers beat the Golden State Warriors, 123-113, for their third straight win.

Andrew Bynum added 20 points and 11 rebounds for the Lakers. Baron Davis led Golden State with 20.

Chauncey Billups scored 20 points, Antonio McDyess 19 and Richard Hamilton 18 to lead the Detroit Pistons to a 104-85 home win over the Charlotte Bobcats.

Caron Butler's 28 points powered the Washington Wizards to a 104-89 home win over the New Jersey Nets.

Vince Carter had 30 for New Jersey and Jason Kidd delivered a triple-double with 13 points, 13 assists and 10 rebounds. *Reuters*

Williams enjoys work after retirement

By Jasmine W. Payo and Tonette Orejas,
Inquirer Central Luzon

RETIREMENT ONLY MEANT MORE WORK for former Detroit Pistons forward Jerome Williams.

But the 6-foot-9 cager nicknamed as the "Junk Yard Dog or JYD" isn't complaining.

Now a community ambassador for NBA Cares, Williams planed in to Manila yesterday before leaving for Angeles City, Pampanga, to work on programs that will support the Filipino youth, education, family and health.

"I want to use this opportunity to see the basketball fans I heard about," said Williams during yesterday's press conference at Bayview Park Hotel.

And hours later, the 34-year-old basked on the experience as he got a rousing welcome from the students of Angeles University Foundation where he received a medal for his sports and community achievements.

"Overwhelming, unbelievable," Williams told the INQUIRER of the reception he received.

It was his first visit to the Philippines and the students, he said, gave him an additional connection to the country. Williams knew the country only through his Filipino-American friend, Kevin Herod.

Hundreds of well-wishers wore gray shirts bearing his famous three-letter nickname and an image of a famous pose he did for the Pistons.

The university commended Williams for his "fine example of hard work, dedication and commitment to education" and his "staunch advocacy and active involvement in community development and youth empowerment programs."

Williams came together with NBA entertainment executive director Donald Ross III and Jemel Buck, operations director of Adams, a non-profit community center.

Both were also conferred with medals on the occasion of the 100th birthday of AUF founder Dr. Barbara Yap-Angeles.

Williams aim to launch several programs, including the development of a basketball academy, in his week-long visit.

"Our objective is to evaluate the youth and see the level of competitive play," he said.

"We want to lift the level of standard in basketball and to regain [our lofty status] in Asia," said AUF president Dr. Emmanuel Angeles. "But this is not purely basketball. We'll also see how we can sponsor programs to improve the quality of the lives of our people."

"I'm excited for this opportunity and I'm looking forward to a wonderful experience," said Williams.

JEROME Williams with Dr. Emmanuel Angeles, Jemel Buck and Donald Ross III during yesterday's press conference at Bayview Hotel. RODEL ROTONI

SPORTSWATCH

Maamo tops non-master

TOP SEED HARISSON MAAMO HUMbled Richelieu Salcedo in 55 moves of an English opening to rule the first leg of the MCC non-master standard chess tourney held over the weekend at St. Francis Square in Mandaluyong City.

Maamo wound up with 5.0 points on four wins and two draws. Tied for second and third with 4.5 points each were Peter Lim and Roberto Torres.

NCA circuit up Dec. 18

THE NATIONAL COCKERS' ASSOCIATION (NCA) will hold the opener of its derby circuit on Dec. 18 at the Rizal Multipurpose Building in Pasig City.

This will be followed by the Olympics of cockfighting, the NCA World Championship Derby, on Jan. 8, 10, and 12.

Among the NCA members are Rep. Iggy Arroyo and Julio Jalandoni, Jerry Ramos, Bebot Villar, Ferdie Buensalida, Efren Canlas and Butch Pichay.

UGBA finals today

CHAMPIONSHIP BATTLES UNFOLD TOday and on Thursday in connection with the UGBA Heritage Cup National 9-stag derby featuring 120 fights at the Araneta Coliseum.

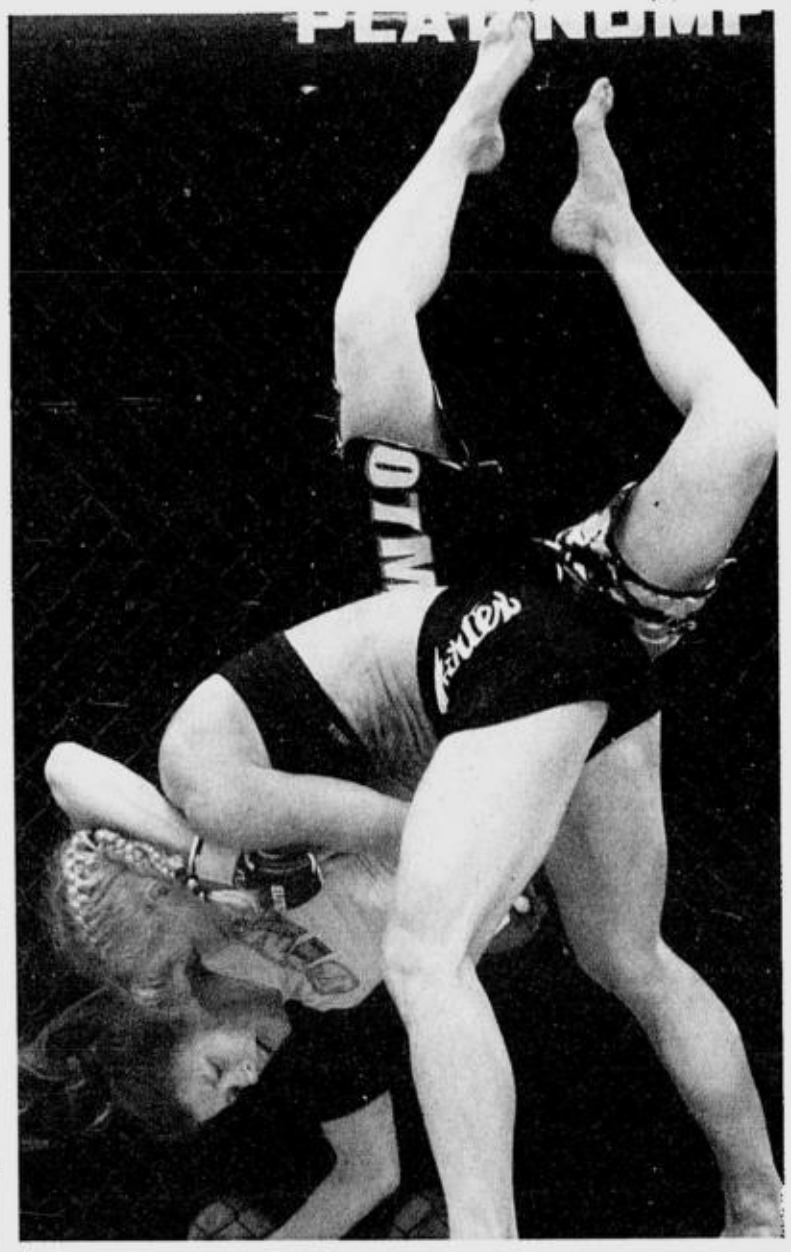
At the end of semifinal round last Saturday, four out of 632 participants lead the pack with six wins each: *sabong* idol Patrick Antonio of Team Sagupaan, Charlie Yu and Jimmy Canda of Salpukan Davao and Nestor Vendevil of Nueva Ecija (GB-ONE).

Six bets have 5.5 points, 41 with 5 points, 23 with 4.5 and 71 with 4 points.

RACING TIPS

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Black Emperor (2), Playing Cool (6), Shy Girl (4), Our Hope (5)
Race 2—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Real Club (3), Madera (1), Queen (4), Emperadora (8), Top Priority (6)
Race 3—(Tri)—Sharp Cookie (3), Ultra Rose (4), Jackson Jazz/Pernicious (1)
Race 4—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Champion Of Show (11), Surround Sound (12), Allez Allez (10), Don Alejandro (7), Canon Rising (8)
Race 5—(Qrt/Tri)—Money Bank (3), Visionary (2), You Got It All (5), Yes Sir I'm Yours (6)
Race 6—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Now Showing (7), Odyssey (4), BMI Baby (5), Friendly Venture (8), Reporter (10)
Race 7—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Dancing Slew (7), Red Hot Water (4), Joker (6), Advance Party (2), Please Don't Stop (8)
Race 8—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Queen's Abbey (7), Cool Reception (13), Gold Money (5), Queen Esther (6), Unleashed (10), Jay Nicole (1)



KATRINE Alendal of Team Gracie tries to pin down Tonya Evinger of Team Shamrock during their match at the Araneta Coliseum on Sunday. Tonya won by submission. EDWIN BACASMAS

Barnett's team sweeps rival in Ring of Fire tilt

CALL IT OVERCONFIDENCE, BUT MIXED martial arts legend Josh Barnett's team predicted his team would sweep the squad of Gokor Chivichyan in the last part of the "Ring of Fire: World Team Challenge" at the Araneta Coliseum Sunday night.

"I'm very confident that my team is the toughest because my team can beat everybody and we are aiming at a possible sweep," said Barnett, the King of Fancrase champion, before the event started.

True enough, Koji Oishi, Yuki Kondo, Renato Sobral and Jeff Monson dominated their respective rivals with a combination of raw power and technique. The match between Ginele Marquez of Team Barnett and Amanda Buckner of Team Gokor was canceled after Buckner tipped the scales two pounds beyond the 130 lb-weight limit.

The triumvirate (Osihi, Kondo and Monson) scored third round unanimous decision wins over Karen Darabyedan, August Wallen and Hakim Gouram of Team Gokor, respectively, while Sobral needed 3 minutes and 33 seconds in the first round to beat Rodney Faverus via submission.

In the undercard matches, two Filipino fighters fell by the wayside in the event organized by Fearless Fighting Productions and Las Vegas-based Platinum Fighting Productions and supported by the tourism department and Crowne Plaza Hotel and Suites.

Salvador "Badong" Domasian of Elorde Mixed Martial Arts Team bowed to Zach "The Lisbon Outlaw" Light of California while Lino "The Terminator" Tagacay of the Red Corner Gym yielded to Justine "Spike 22 Cure Bread" Cruz of Guam.

Earlier, Team Shamrock also swept Team Gracie with a 5-0 victory. *Marlon Bernardino*

Manaog tops executive chess

VETERAN STEWART MANAOG SETTLED for a quick draw against fellow National Master Ernesto Fernandez in the sixth and final round to rule the ninth leg of the National Chess Federation of the Philippines Executives and Professionals Chess Challenge at the Greenhouse Grill, Diliman, Quezon City, on Saturday.

Manaog tallied 5.5 points on five wins and one draw to claim his first title in the event supported by NCFP director and Benguet Governor Raul Molintas and supported by NCFP chair Rep. Matias Defensor, GM Eugene Torre, IM Rudy Tan Cardoso and Cebu sportsman Matias Aznar.

Fernandez accumulated 4.0 points and shared second to fifth places with Leodegario Ricana, Dr. Jenny Mayor and Trine Olmedo.

Meanwhile, all is set for the Marikina City Age Group Invitational Chess Championships which offers a total prize of P15,500 on Dec. 23 at the Marikina Sports Complex in Marikina City. Call 0919-6268874, 933-6719. *Marlon Bernardino*

Miñoza gets ATP Special Achievement Award

BANGKOK—CHINESE STAR LIANG Wen-chong has been voted the Asian Tour Players' Player of the Year, capping a breakthrough season that saw him win the UBS Order of Merit title.

Filipino veteran Frankie Miñoza picked up the other main gong at a ceremony here Sunday night when he won the Special Achievement Award for an outstanding season in which he won once on the Asian Tour and Japan Golf Tour.

"I'm truly honored. I hope I can win this again next year," said Miñoza.

The 29-year-old Liang, who clinched the money race crown at the Volvo Masters of Asia here on Sunday, got the nod for a sterling season which included one victory and eight other Top-10 finishes.

Liang also picked up the Lowest Stroke Average Award with 70.41, pipping Thailand's Thongchai Jaidee to the accolade as the most consistent player on the Asian Tour this season.

Bagging the top three awards completed a remarkable journey for the Zhongshan-based Liang, who burst onto the professional scene in 1999 before gradually completing his rise to the top of the Asian summit.

Liang replaced India's Jeev Milkha Singh as Asia's number one.

Liang ended the season with a haul of $532,590.

Rookie of the Year award went to Australian Scott Hend, who finished fourth on the Order of Merit following five Top-10s which included runner-up finishes at the Pakistan Open and Volvo China Open.

Asia's players picked Sentosa Golf Club's Serapong Course as the Host Venue of the Year for the second successive season.

Chapchai earned bragging rights as the Birdie Leader for the season, while Scotsman Simon Yates won the Greens in Regulation category.

Thailand's Prayad Marksaeng, winner of the season-ending Volvo Masters of Asia, topped the Lowest Putting Average category. *AFP*

FRANKIE MIÑOZA: Another honor at 48

BUSINESS

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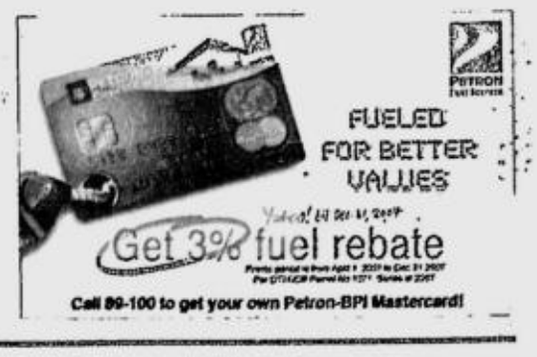
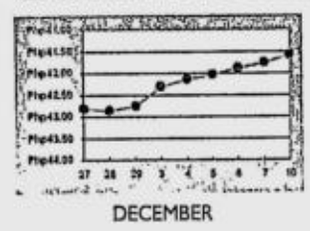


Peso still rising, now at 41.58 to $1

BSP intervention fails to stop currency's climb



By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO SHONE IN LACKLUSTER ASIAN CURRENCY MARKETS yesterday to close at a new seven-and-a-half-year high of 41.58 against the dollar, powered by OFW remittances ahead of the Christmas holidays.

The local currency opened at 41.69 and hit a low of 41.715 on suspected central bank intervention in early trade, but regained its momentum to close at the intra-day high of 41.58 against the greenback.

The peso is now trading at its strongest level since hitting 41.56 to a dollar on May 15, 2000.

Elsewhere in developing Asia, other currencies like the Thai baht, Indonesian rupiah and Malaysian ringgit posted modest gains while the Korean and Taiwanese dollar fell on cautious trading ahead of the US Federal Reserve's interest rate-setting Monday night. The peso is Asia's best performing currency for this year, having gained about 18 percent since January.

"The BSP (Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas) is trying to temper the peso's appreciation by buying dollars, but it's really a strong season for OFW (overseas Filipino worker) inflows," a currency trader said.

Another trader said the BSP's intervention was "not noticeable" given the strong influx of foreign funds.

Global currency markets sold down the dollar ahead of an expected interest rate cut by the US Federal Reserve on

PESO/ B3

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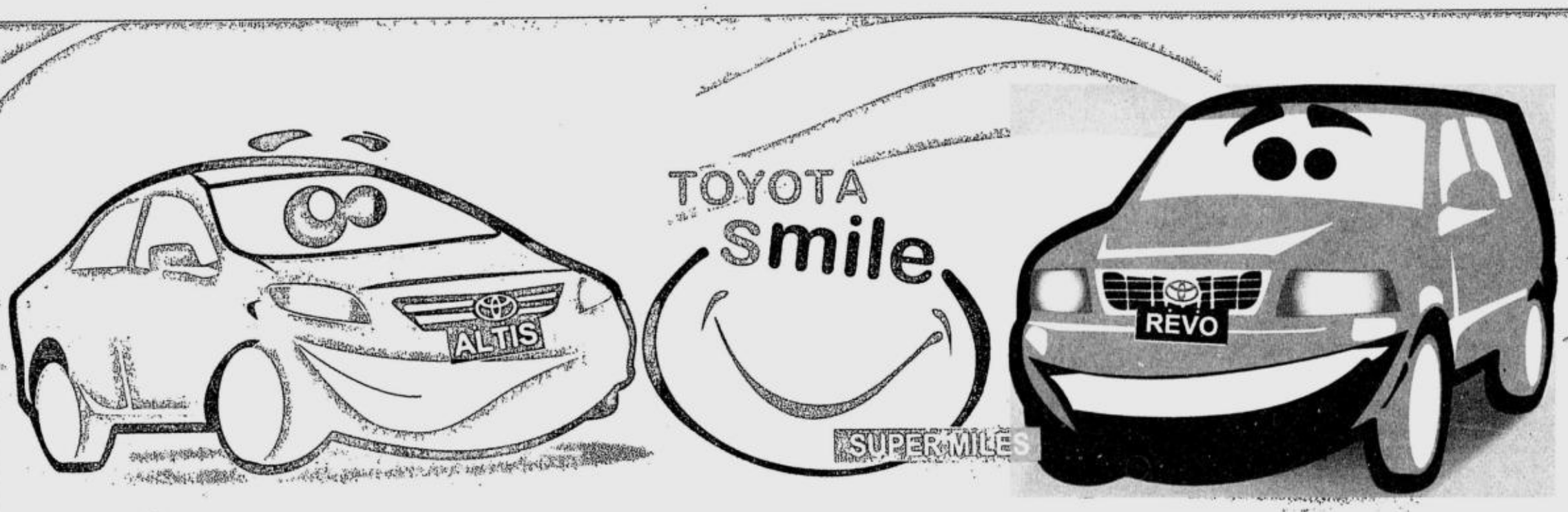
RP ranks 15th in per capita scale /B8



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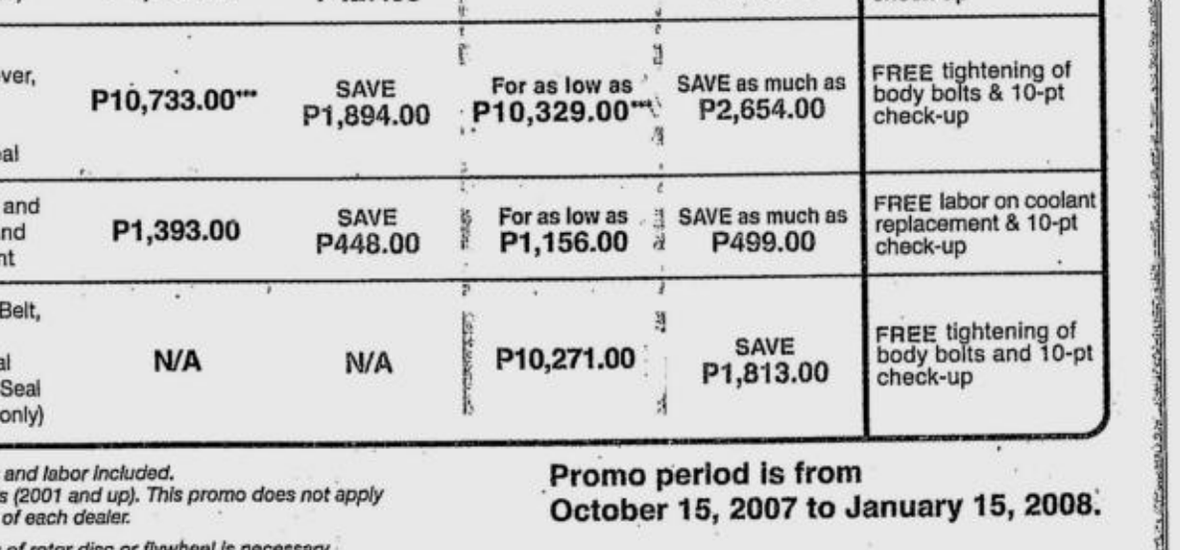


Oriental Peninsula gets SEC permit to sell shares

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE Commission (SEC) yesterday issued a permit allowing holding firm Oriental Peninsula Resources Group Inc. to pursue its initial public offer starting yesterday until Dec. 14.

Oriental Peninsula has also postponed its listing date by a day to Dec. 19.

In an order dated Dec. 10, SEC director Justina Callangan granted a "certificate of permit to sell" in favor of Oriental Peninsula authorizing the company to sell shares.

In a memorandum for brokers also circulated yesterday, Asian Alliance Investment Corp., the lead underwriter for the offer, said the delay in securing the permit to sell shares stemmed from an SEC requirement to make additional disclosures relating to the status of pending legal cases and some minor revisions to the company's prospectus, which Oriental Peninsula has complied with.

Over the weekend, the Philippine Stock Exchange issued a notice saying Oriental Peninsula was supposed to postpone its offering period slated from Dec. 6 to 12 as it awaited the SEC's consent to sell shares.

However, the notice was immediately replaced yesterday with an announcement that the company was pursuing its IPO instead from Dec. 10 to 14 and listing on Dec. 19.

Platinum Group Metals Corp. (PGMC), an operator of a mining project in southern Palawan, alleged last week that Oriental Peninsula failed to make full disclosure over litigation on the Palawan mining claims of its subsidiary, Citinickel Mines and Development Corp., lawyers of Platinum Group had said.

But Oriental Peninsula said it disclosed all pending cases involving the company, Citinickel Mines and its Palawan mines, its lawyers claimed.

Oriental Peninsula aims to raise some P804 million from the sale of 300 million shares at the stock market. Its final IPO price is P2.68 a share.

The company earlier disclosed its offer price range was between P1.98 and P2.98 to generate gross proceeds of between P594 million and P894 million.

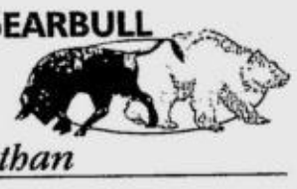
Proceeds from the offer will help fund capital expenditures and working capital.

Oriental Peninsula owns 94 percent of City Nickel Mines, which has two mining rights in Palawan.

Filipino groups Golden Spin Realty Inc. and Citimax Group Inc. own 38.5 percent and 12.9 percent in the company, respectively.

Death by a thousand cuts

MR. BEARBULL



Ron Nathan

A YOUNG COUPLE IN EXCELLENT health was married for 5 years but was unable to produce any children. They attended fertility clinics but there was nothing wrong with either of them. In desperation, they decided to consult their family priest.

"My children," the priest began. "The Lord will listen to your prayers and I am sure you will be blessed shortly. In fact, I am planning an extended stay in Rome for 15 years and while I am in the Vatican, I will light a candle for you."

"Thank you. Thank you Father," said the couple.

Before leaving, the priest promised to return and visit them.

Fifteen years passed and the priest returned to Manila as a Bishop. While resting on his porch one morning, he remembered his promise and went to visit their home. Sounds of screaming and crying filled the air. Overjoyed by the thought that their prayers had been answered, he entered the house. There stood the distraught wife with 15 children.

"My dear," said the bishop. "I wish to congratulate your husband for this miracle. Where is he?"

"He just left for Rome," she said in a desperate voice.

"Rome? Why did he go to Rome?" asked the bishop.

"To blow out the candle you lit."

* * *

LAST Friday, the US Labor Department announced that another 94,000 jobs had been created, more than the 80,000 expected and following the 160,000 created in October. The jobless rate remained at 4.7 percent (low) so there is no sign of a recession. Wages rose by 3.8 percent and consumer expenditure by 3.3 percent, both well above the inflation rate and post-Thanksgiving sales have been good. Nevertheless, consumer confidence has fallen to its lowest level in 2 years. There are certainly no grounds for expecting a half-point rate cut but everybody is expecting a quarter-point and statements from the Fed chair and vice chair indicate that this is likely. GDP in the 4th quarter is expected to slow from 4.9 percent to about 1.5 percent.

The economy has created 1.3 million jobs this year, well below last year and slightly below the 5-year average. US Treasury Secretary PAULSON said that the job market reflected a sound economy. Average weekly earnings were $595, about P24,000 and more than 10 times our weekly average wage. The weak dollar helped improve US exports and Boeing has an unfair advantage over Airbus, which is priced in expensive euros. Bush has announced a plan to help borrowers who are in trouble but it will be difficult, if not impossible, to implement. Once a contract is signed between two parties, any attempt of coercion by the government is likely to be thrown out by the courts. Only an act of Congress could enforce this. Credit cards are being used more and more to fund purchases and I think that some time next year, there will be a substantial number of people defaulting on their credit cards.

China is getting positively embarrassed by its foreign reserves, which now total a massive $1.5 trillion, mostly at the expense of the United States. The banks have had to put aside another 1 percent of their reserves, making a total of 14.5 percent this year. Last week, the yuan was allowed to appreciate 3 days in succession ahead of PAULSON's meeting in Beijing next week. China is not succumbing to US pressure, it is doing this to slow down its economy, which cannot sustain a growth rate of 11.5 percent. This is already causing inflation to reach 6.5 percent, which is more than twice the central bank's target of 3 percent. Since abandoning its peg in 2005, the yuan has appreciated 12 percent against the dollar and 8 percent against the euro. The futures market is betting that the yuan will depreciate 9.25 percent against the dollar next year. Meanwhile, China has raised its bank rate 5 times and its 1-year lending rate is 7.29 percent. The CSI 300 index has risen 147 percent this year.

The Bank of England, grappling with inflation, an economic slowdown and a certain housing recession next year, cut its bank rate from 5.75 percent to 5.5 percent. House prices in the United Kingdom have risen even faster than in the United States so the potential for a meltdown is greater. GDP is only about 2.4 percent and inflation is slightly above the target rate and rising.

Asian stocks across the region rose in line with the surge in the S&P 500 index and the PHISIX had its longest winning streak in 6 months. Despite the rise in local stocks, foreign brokers have been consistent net sellers for the past 5 weeks of Filipino stocks, averaging about P500 million a day. Clearly, local institutions have been supporting the market in a big way and most investors are happy with their investments. CEBU AIR will be allowed to take off early next year. Record remittances have obscured our poor exports and our large trade deficit and pushed the peso to 41.75 to a dollar. Call centers, which did not hedge the peso, have incurred large forex losses and a few small ones have closed down but the industry is still expanding. IPVG and AO Capital have made a bid of $15 a share for PEOPLESUPPORT, which is being evaluated by the company. ELI is having a rights issue of 1 to 3 at P1, well above the current market price. Unless the price exceeds P1 by Dec. 17, no investors will take it up.

SPLASH announced that it would start distributing its products in the United States and Canada, targeting Filipinos, Latinos and Hispanics. The company will capitalize on its skin whitening products such as SKINWHITE and EXTRACT. It will also sell THERAHERB (virgin coconut oil) and attempt to get a slice of the $64-billion health and wellness market in North America. At the end of September, net income surged 122 percent on lower operating costs. The IPO was poorly received and I did not recommend it at P8.98 but when it fell to P6.20, I could not resist accumulating the shares, as they were dirt-cheap. I expect the shares to recover to P9 next year. I cannot understand this craze to go white. I think brown is more beautiful (Beyonce and Jessica Alba are my crushes) and I am going on holiday to lie in the sun and turn brown. It is all a pigment of the imagination.

PUTIN has put in his Greater Russia party so he will remain de facto the CZAR and his wife the CZARDINE. On the first day after giving my old e-mail address, I received 76 messages. I answered a few and then gave up. There is a great demand by the public for a stock exchange course but not enough is being done. It should not be confined to Manila but should be available in all the major cities. I am over the age limit to provide this service unfortunately.

Shares close 1.9% lower

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 1.9-PERCENT lower yesterday as investors booked profits ahead of a key meeting on interest rates by the US central bank, dealers said.

They said a rate cut could give the US economy a boost amid a worsening housing slump and credit squeeze.

The composite index gave up 69.87 points to 3,675.52, off a low of 3,665.57.

The broader all-share index fell 30.78 points to 2,242.85.

There were 77 decliners and 31 advancers, with 49 unchanged.

About two billion shares worth P4 billion changed hands.

Expectations of a rate cut by the US Federal Reserve and receding fears of a US recession fueled the recent rally.

But the chances of an aggressive half-point cut are now slim following a slightly better-than-expected US employment report on Friday, some analysts said. *AFP*

CURRENCIES

December 10, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.682221	1.000000	41.7450
Japan	Yen	0.006109	0.008955	0.3738
United Kingdom	Pound	1.386547	2.032400	84.8425
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.087518	0.128284	5.3552
Switzerland	Franc	0.604806	0.886525	37.0080
Canada	Dollar	0.679030	0.995322	41.5497
Singapore	Dollar	0.474589	0.695652	29.0400
Australia	Dollar	0.600072	0.879585	36.7183
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.819209	2.666596	111.3171
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.182164	0.267016	11.1466
Brunei	Dollar	0.472944	0.693241	28.9393
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000074	0.000108	0.0045
Thailand	Baht	0.022590	0.033113	1.3823
UAE	Dirham	0.185840	0.272405	11.3715
EU	Euro	1.000000	1.465800	61.1898
Korea	Won	0.000742	0.001088	0.0454
China	Yuan**	0.092154	0.135080	5.6389
Denmark	Kroner	0.134069	0.196518	8.2036
India	Rupee	0.017333	0.025407	1.0606
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.205179	0.300752	12.5549
New Zealand	Dollar	0.530787	0.778028	32.4788
Sweden	Kroner	0.106542	0.156169	6.5193
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.021117	0.030953	1.2921

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY time—Dec. 7, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian time closing rate as of Dec. 7, 2007

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of December 10, 2007)

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		BANKS					
17.5	6.8	Asiatrust Development Bank Inc.	8.6	8.6	8.6	8.6	20,000
73	43	Banco de Oro-EPCI Inc.	62.5	63	59.5	60	1,530,400
73.5	53	Bank of the Philippine Islands	65	65	64	65	1,369,900
748	544	China Banking Corp.	660	660	655	660	16,580
40	16.52	Chinatrust (Phils.) Comm'l Banking Corp.	36	36	36	36	5,200
23.5	14	Citystate Savings Bank	23	23	23	23	300
75.5	47.5	Metropolitan Bank and Trust Company	62.5	62.5	60.5	60.5	1,904,800
65.5	39	Philippine National Bank	53	54	51	52	990,500
68	47	Philippine Savings Bank	60	60	60	60	1,000
39.57	20.43	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	25	25	24.75	25	88,600
90	63	Security Bank Corp.	74.5	75	74	75	15,400
66	42	Union Bank of the Philippines	44.5	45	44.5	44.5	263,300
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
2.22	0.6	Bankard Inc.	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	117,000
16.25	4.6	CitisecOnline.com Inc.	12.25	12.25	11.75	11.75	157,800
1.6	0.5	First Abacus Financial Holdings Corp.	1.04	1.04	0.99	0.99	320,000
5.9	4.8	I-Remit Inc.	5	5	4.9	4.9	35,000
1,970.00	1,560.00	Manulife Financial Corp.	1,640.00	1,640.00	1,640.00	1,640.00	1,980
5	2.7	National Reinsurance Corp. of the Phils.	3.2	3.3	3.2	3.3	838,000
1,390.00	260	The Philippine Stock Exchange Inc.	1,090.00	1,090.00	1,060.00	1,070.00	24,920
1.94	1.3	Vantage Corp.	1.5	1.52	1.5	1.52	211,000
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
6.2	3.8	Aboitiz Power Corp.	5.3	5.4	5.1	5.4	2,187,000
0.57	0.22	East Asia Power Resources Corp.	0.42	0.46	0.41	0.46	3,230,000
70.5	49	First Gen Corp.	61	61	59.5	61	343,800
92	57	First Phil. Holdings Corp.	73.5	74.5	73	74.5	796,200
18.5	8.8	Manila Water Company Inc.	17.75	18	17.75	17.75	3,669,800
105.45	44.09	Manila Electric Company	88	88.5	86.5	86.5	1,202,500
7.8	4.1	PNOC Energy Development Corp.	6.7	6.9	6.7	6.9	16,584,000
7.4	3.95	Petron Corp.	6.3	6.3	6.1	6.1	6,999,000
14.75	6.4	Phoenix Petroleum Philippines Inc.	6.8	6.9	6.7	6.7	139,000
2.04	0.91	Trans-Asia Oil and Energy Dev't Corp.	1.36	1.38	1.34	1.34	942,000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
6.3	3.4	Alaska Milk Corp.	4.9	4.9	4.85	4.85	100,000
2.32	1.48	Alliance Tuna International Inc.	1.62	1.68	1.6	1.6	406,000
2.2	1.08	CADP Group Corp.	1.52	1.54	1.52	1.54	22,000
61	40.5	Jollibee Foods Corp.	52.5	52.5	51	51.5	1,917,400
0.98	0.5	RFM Corp.	0.72	0.72	0.72	0.72	50,000
3.1	2.06	Roxas Holdings	2.9	2.9	2.85	2.85	201,000
80	42.5	San Miguel Corp. A	50.5	50.5	50	50	64,600
88	43	San Miguel Corp. B	51	51	50	50	94,700
20.75	13.5	Universal Robina Corp.	14.5	14.5	14.25	14.25	1,603,300
0.55	0.24	Vitarich Corp.	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	110,000
		CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
6.1	2.65	EEI Corp.	4.55	4.55	4.5	4.5	166,000
7	3.65	Republic Cement Corp.	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	76,000
2	0.81	Southeast Asia Cement Holdings Inc.	1.04*	1.04	1.02	1.04	570,000
23	2.12	TKC Steel Corp.	8.8	8.9	8.6	8.9	128,000
		CHEMICALS					
6.3	3.75	Chemrez Technologies Inc.	4.25	4.25	4.2	4.25	525,000
1.46	0.51	Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.86	0.86	0.86	0.86	30,000
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
7.4	5.1	Panasonic Manufacturing Phils. Corp.	7	7	7	7	3,000
0.75	0.175	Picop Resources Inc.	0.37	0.37	0.35	0.37	2,540,000
9	6.2	Splash Corp.	7	7.2	6.9	7	872,000
		HOLDING FIRMS					
39	18.75	ABS-CBN Hldg Corp. - Phil. Depost Receipts	34.5	34.5	34.5	34.5	100
0.185	0.0575	AJD.net Holdings Inc.	0.13	0.135	0.13	0.13	28,950,000
1.28	0.29	APC Group Inc.	0.69	0.69	0.65	0.65	1,710,000
3.65	1.5	ATN Holdings Inc. A	2.55	2.55	2.55	2.55	50,000
3.7	1.5	ATN Holdings Inc. B	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	40,000
0.018	0.0075	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. A	0.0095	0.01	0.0095	0.01	14,000,000
0.019	0.0075	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. B	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	5,400,000
9.7	5.8	Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc.	7	7	7	7	7,192,000
0.021	0.0095	Alcorn Gold Resources Corp.	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	19,100,000
7.3	3.5	Alliance Global Group Inc.	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.3	18,753,000
1.38	0.59	Alsons Consolidated Resources Inc.	0.78	0.82	0.77	0.77	620,000
2.9	0.92	Anglo-Philippine Holdings Corp.	2.42	2.42	2.4	2.42	86,000
8	0.8	Aries Prime Resources Inc.	3.2	3.2	3	3.1	92,000
645	400	Ayala Corp.	585	585	570	575	185,180
5.8	2.1	Benpres Holdings Corp.	4.35	4.4	4.3	4.3	2,214,000
12	5.6	DMCI Holdings Inc.	9.8	9.9	9.7	9.8	18,206,000
2.5	0.85	F and J Prince Holdings Corp. A	1.46	1.5	1.46	1.5	115,000
8	3.5	Filinvest Development Corp.	6.3	6.4	6.3	6.4	167,000
3.55	1.76	House of Investments Inc.	2	2	2	2	105,000
14.5	8.9	JG Summit Holdings Inc.	10.5	10.5	10.25	10.5	66,000
28	1.42	Lodestar Investment Hldgs Corp.	21.5	21.5	18.75	19	394,900
0.95	0.28	Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.48	0.48	0.48	0.48	10,000
11.5	1.5	Minerales Industrias Corp.	7.2	7.3	7	7.1	3,902,000
8.5	3	PAL Holdings Inc.	6.7	6.9	6.7	6.9	288,000
0.28	0.016	Pacifica Inc. A	0.235	0.235	0.225	0.23	58,680,000
1.54	0.63	Prime Media Holdings Inc.	0.63	0.63	0.63	0.63	30,000
0.75	0.19	Prime Orion Philippines Inc.	0.53	0.53	0.53	0.53	1,200,000
2.1	1.3	Republic Glass Holdings Corp.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	1,000
452.5	280.52	SM Investments Corp.	360	360	347.5	350	688,110
0.73	0.145	Sinophil Corp.	0.36	0.37	0.36	0.36	1,550,000
2	0.92	South China Resources Inc.	1.48	1.48	1.48	1.48	55,000
0.75	0.12	Welex Industries Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.32	0.33	6,600,000
		PROPERTY					
2.34	1	A Brown Company Inc.	1.46	1.46	1.44	1.44	482,000
19.25	11.88	Ayala Land Inc.	16.25	16.25	15.75	16	14,686,200
1.88	1	Belle Corp.	1.22	1.22	1.22	1.22	400,000
4.7	3.15	Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.95	3.95	3.7	3.7	147,000
2.04	1.56	Cebu Property Venture and Dev't Corp.A	1.86	1.86	1.86	1.86	50,000
2.06	1.7	Cebu Property Venture and Dev't Corp.B	1.82	1.82	1.82	1.82	152,000
0.83	0.24	Cyber Bay Corp.	0.38	0.38	0.37	0.37	2,480,000
0.99	0.53	Empire East Land Holdings Inc.	0.87	0.87	0.84	0.85	19,610,000
6.9	1.1	Eton Properties Philippines Inc.	4.5	5	4.35	4.4	666,000
0.47	0.0575	Ever Gotesco Res. and Hold'gs Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.24	0.25	4,730,000
1.48	0.61	Fil-Estate Land Inc.	1.02	1.04	1.02	1.02	3,651,000
2.44	1.32	Filinvest Land Inc.	1.66	1.66	1.56	1.58	32,838,000
1.12	0.31	MRC Allied Industries Inc.	0.63	0.64	0.63	0.63	1,850,000
4.6	2.15	Megaworld Corp.	4.35	4.35	4.1	4.25	25,837,000
6.4	1.5	Metro Pacific Investments Corp.	4.45	4.45	4.2	4.3	405,000
5.2	2.2	Metro Pacific Investments Corp. - Warrants	3.1	3.1	2.6	3	166,000
0.7	0.135	Phil. Estates Corp.	0.34	0.35	0.34	0.35	4,000,000
0.86	0.32	Philippine Realty and Holdings Corp.	0.45	0.48	0.44	0.45	790,000
9.2	1.7	Polar Property Holdings Corp.	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	3,000
23	14.5	Robinson Land Corp.	18.25	18.25	17.75	17.75	3,279,600
5.9	1.95	SM Development Corp.	4	4	4	4	4,000
13.5	7.84	SM Prime Holdings Inc.	11.5	11.5	11.25	11.25	1,909,300
3.25	1.5	Shang Properties Inc.	2.2	2.2	2.18	2.18	302,000
4.5	0.38	Sta. Lucia Land Inc.	2	2.24	2	2.18	8,429,000
1.34	0.46	Suntrust Home Developers Inc.	0.66	0.66	0.65	0.65	770,000
7.5	3.65	Vista Land and Lifescapes Inc.	5.5	6	5.5	5.7	18,606,000
		MEDIA					
12	7.6	GMA Holdings Inc.	8.6	8.6	8.4	8.4	520,000
11.75	7.5	GMA Network Inc.	8.2	8.2	8.1	8.1	95,000
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
2.12	1.1	Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc.	1.4	1.4	1.38	1.38	343,000
1,750.00	1,180.00	Globe Telecom Inc.	1,635.00	1,635.00	1,580.00	1,585.00	38,060
3,265.00	2,250.00	Phil. Long Distance Telephone Co.	3,115.00	3,120.00	3,025.00	3,035.00	261,520
8.1	5.5	Pilipino Telephone Corp.	7.1	7.1	6.8	7	1,877,000
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
0.39	0.17	Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	500,000
0.065	0.027	ISM Communications Corp.	0.038	0.039	0.038	0.039	9,600,000
5	1.62	Information Capital Tech. Ventures Inc.	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	16,000
2.9	1.1	Ionics Inc.	1.8	1.8	1.72	1.72	120,000
11.5	3.55	IPVG Corp.	8.5	8.5	8.3	8.4	297,000
0.32	0.05	Island Information and Technology Inc.	0.185	0.185	0.18	0.185	11,360,000
2.24	1.1	Music Semiconductors Corp.	2.02	2.08	1.96	2.05	5,083,000
0.0725	0.03	Philweb Corp.	0.049	0.049	0.048	0.048	7,700,000
5.8	1.64	Transpacific Broadband Group Int'l Inc.	2.9	2.9	2.7	2.7	67,000
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
2.14	1.2	Aboitiz Transport System Corp.	1.28	1.28	1.26	1.26	398,000
49	18.75	Int'l Container Terminal Services Inc.	46	46	44.5	45.5	696,100
2.16	0.93	Keppel Philippines Marine Inc.	1.96	2	1.96	2	303,000
2.7	1.12	Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.56	1.74	1.56	1.68	70,000
		HOTEL & LEISURE					
16.5	5	Acesite (Phils.) Hotel Corp.	8.9	9	8.9	9	131,000
4.25	1.8	Leisure and Resorts World Corp.	2.44	2.44	2.38	2.38	204,000
6	2.16	Manila Jockey Club Inc.	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	7,000
1.52	0.32	Premiere Entertainment Productions Inc.	1.4	1.4	1.34	1.38	2,570,000
1.2	0.55	Waterfront Philippines Inc.	0.88	0.88	0.88	0.88	3,090,000
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
43	6.6	JTH Davies Holdings Inc.	30	30	30	30	15,300
6	2.04	Macroasia Corp.	4.9	5	4.85	4.9	381,000
17.25	9.8	Pacific Online Systems Corp.	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	2,000
30	6.2	Paxys Inc.	6.4	6.6	6.4	6.5	173,000
477.5	380	eTelecare Global Solutions Inc.	390	390	380	390	2,620
		MINING					
0.017	0.0085	Abra Mining and Industrial Corp.	0.01	0.011	0.01	0.01	86,400,000
7.2	3.6	Apex Mining Company Inc. A	6.5	6.5	6.4	6.4	192,000
7.4	3.85	Apex Mining Company Inc. B	6.9	6.9	6.8	6.8	145,000
21.25	8.1	Atlas Cons. Mining and Dev't Corp.	13.75	13.75	13.5	13.75	624,900
20.5	8.9	Benguet Corp. A	18.5	20.5	18.25	19.5	1,510,600
35	24	Benguet Corp. B	25.5	28	25.5	28	23,500
12.75	1.96	Dizon Copper Silver Mines Inc.	9.5	10.5	9.4	10.25	834,000
3.1	0.6	GEOGRACE Resources Philippines Inc.	2.14	2.16	2.08	2.14	34,099,000
0.56	0.18	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. A	0.53	0.54	0.52	0.52	46,660,000
0.61	0.22	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. B	0.58	0.58	0.56	0.58	11,220,000
0.038	0.017	Manila Mining Corp. A	0.029	0.029	0.028	0.029	46,100,000
30	3.6	NIHAO Minerals Resources Int'l Inc.	22	22	21.25	22	238,900
0.021	0.0068	Omico Corp.	0.014	0.014	0.013	0.013	5,100,000
0.015	0.007	Omico Corp. - Warrants	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	2,000,000
11.25	3.5	Philex Mining Corp.	9.7	9.8	9.6	9.8	1,602,000
1.36	0.58	United Paragon Mining Corp.	0.71	0.72	0.7	0.7	2,050,000
1.8	0.99	Vulcan Industrial and Mining Corp.	1.14	1.14	1.12	1.12	77,000
		OIL					
0.58	0.26	Basic Energy Corp.	0.35	0.35	0.33	0.33	1,450,000
0.029	0.01	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. A	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	5,800,000
0.03	0.011	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. B	0.027	0.027	0.027	0.027	28,000,000
0.032	0.0097	The Philodrill Corp.	0.029	0.029	0.028	0.029	132,600,000

	AVERAGES		VOLUME	VALUE
Financial	893.25 DOWN	10.07	7,911,680	412,222,075.00
Industrial	4,397.04 DOWN	11.98	45,572,300	564,151,490.00
Holding Firms	2,063.87 DOWN	42.04	190,450,190	748,042,255.00
Property	1,632.54 DOWN	35.26	146,077,100	632,081,350.00
Service	1,838.88 DOWN	47.88	45,584,600	935,034,950.00
Mining & Oil	8,626.08 DOWN	65.70	1,519,726,900	706,164,210.00
All Shares Index	2,242.85 DOWN	30.78		
PSEI	3,675.52 DOWN	69.87		
	GRAND TOTALS		1,955,322,770	3,997,696,330.00

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SOURCE: TECHNISTOCK, PSE

Spanish energy firm to invest $250M in biofuel

50,000 ha of land to be planted to cassava

By Amy R. Remo

YAP

AN ENERGY FIRM based in Spain plans to invest as much as $250 million to develop 50,000 hectares of land into cassava plantations.

The cassava will be used as feedstock for biofuel facilities in the Philippines.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap said Abengoa Bioenergy had signed a memorandum of understanding with the Philippine Agricultural Development and Commercial Corp. during President Macapagal-Arroyo's two-day state visit to Spain.

Abengoa is the largest ethanol producer in Europe, where it operates several bioethanol facilities. It also has plants in Brazil and the United States, where it ranks fifth in the industry.

The MOU, which is valid for a year, was signed by Agriculture Undersecretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat and Abengoa chair Javier Salgado Leirado last week.

Under the MOU, Abengoa will help the DA identify varieties of cassava for cultivation trials.

Puyat explained that Abengoa would provide design engineering and supply the machinery required to develop cassava plantations, as well as study the possibility of establishing bioethanol production plants in the Philippines.

According to the Spanish firm, it expects its feedstock production from the planned distillery in the Philippines to reach some 1 million to 1.2 million tons, generating about 150 to 200 million liters of bioethanol a year.

Through the Abengoa-PADCC working committee, the PADCC will assist Abengoa in conducting capability enhancement training for farmers.

Puyat added that Abengoa would lend its technical expertise in the agricultural production side to develop high yielding varieties and increase feedstock productivity.

"We deeply appreciate the plans of Abengoa to assist in the development of the local bioethanol industry by producing ethanol at competitive prices and at the same time, expanding the domestic market for ethanol gasoline," Yap said.

Yap noted that Abengoa and PADCC can enter into partnerships focusing on energy crops development and cost-competitive biomass technology.

Earlier, a Bilbao-based biodiesel leader in Europe—Bionor Transformacion S.A.—also revealed plans to invest $200 million in the Philippines to develop at least 100,000 hectares of land into jatropha plantations to be used as feedstock for biofuel facilities in the country.

All that gas!

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

THE OFFICIAL POLICE REPORT, which was based on an official police, ah, "theory," on the "explosion" at the mall in the hub of this country's big business, still bothers me.

The Philippine National Police concluded that the explosion resulted from a combination of gas and diesel fumes.

And if we, the public, could not believe such a finding, according to the PNP, we should just go to court to settle the issue.

Right away, sir! And we shall have to wait for the court's final judgment in only a couple of centuries!

It's just that, we still do not know the lessons that we should have learned from the deadly explosion, in which 11 people actually died, and close to a hundred were injured.

What do we do, boss, while the court is deciding whether gas or a bomb caused the explosion? Do we avoid going to the toilet?

* * *

ACCORDING to news reports quoting the PNP, the "gas" in the explosion was mainly methane.

From where did the methane come then? Based on the PNP report, it came from human waste accumulated in the septic tank under the mall.

Now, we all have septic tanks in our homes, right? Not only that, all the places we go to—including the PNP headquarters—have septic tanks!

Is the PNP telling us we are no longer safe everywhere we go, because s..t can explode in our faces anytime?

* * *

AS IT TURNED out, the mall has no septic tanks. According to the owner of the mall, which is Ayala Land, it only has a "sump" pit.

By design, sump pits are small holes in the basement. In my little experience with sump pits, which I built in my house to store the rain that I use to water the plants, the holes are only about one square meter in size.

Ayala Land has been saying all along that the sump pit contained only fresh human waste, both the solid and liquid kinds, which could not have produced methane yet.

In comparison, "septic tanks" contain the human waste that, after several months, promotes the growth of microorganisms that, in turn, eat the waste and thus give off the methane.

There, the septic tanks in our homes all have methane. I hate to tell the PNP this, but I searched the Internet for a single case of an exploding septic tank, and I searched in vain.

The explanation is simple: septic tanks have holes. These holes relieve the septic tanks of any pressure from methane build-up. For the gas to explode, it must be under intense pressure—similar to the LPG gas tank.

And so, if we are to believe the PNP—that even a little amount of fresh human waste can explode—do we take it then that, as the biggest lesson we can learn from the explosion, the PNP from now on must closely watch the "Malabanan" people?

Some terrorists just may use their goods, right?

* * *

AS FOR THE diesel angle, Ayala Land officials have been telling the public that its diesel tank in the basement was only slightly damaged.

More importantly, the fuel that was stored in the tank, well, was still inside it. How could the diesel still be there if it was supposed to have caused the explosion?

Hmm ... Maybe we'll just stick to the s..t explanation.

* * *

JUST recently, the House of Representatives energy committee passed a resolution amending the Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001, also known as Epira.

The committee did the feat after conducting only three hearings, which were also done on short notices.

Don't tell me our lawmakers have become that efficient!

According to our heroic congressmen, the amendments were meant to speed up the delivery of Epira's benefits to consumers. You know, something that vague!

Anyway, the House energy committee in effect lowered the threshold of privatization of Napocor power generating assets from 70 percent (in the original Epira) to only 50 percent.

Heading the committee move was none other than Rep. Mikey Arroyo.

* * *

UNDER the original Epira, at least 70 percent of Napocor's assets and IPP contracts should have been privatized by 2004.

The law also required that all Napocor assets and IPP contracts should be privatized by 2009.

Today, only 36 percent of Napocor's assets have been sold. And it still has all the IPP contracts. In other words, only 9 percent of Napocor's assets and contracts have been privatized.

How could such a thing—what did our beloved congressmen call it—"benefit" consumers?

* * *

BETWEEN us girls, Napocor president Cyrill del Callar lobbied hard for House Bill No. 3042, or the Epira amendment.

For the past several months, Del Callar was busy giving presentations to powerful members of Congress and to some officials in Malacañang on the same Epira amendments.

The son of his mother did not even consult the sector that was supposed to benefit from his action, which was none other than the "consumer."

Also, the American Chamber of Commerce in the Philippines was rather vocal in its opposition to Del Callar's one-man mission to mangle the Epira.

But why would Del Callar want the state-owned firm to continue to dominate the power industry, which Epira precisely wanted to change?

Don't tell me he has fallen in love with the power plants?

Consumers take to Filipino goods, shun imports

By Michelle V. Remo

FILIPINO CONSUMERS have shifted their focus more toward domestically produced goods and rendered services—the reason why growth in merchandise imports has been anemic despite the sharp rise of the peso.

Finance Undersecretary Gil Beltran, who also sits as an economist of the Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC), said the growing income of Filipino households are benefiting local producers and service providers more than foreign traders.

In an interview with reporters, Beltran said visiting officials of the International Monetary Fund had asked for the rationale behind the weak growth of Philippine imports despite the robust growth of the economy and the strong peso.

The IMF representatives were in the country to assess the overall economy and the government's fiscal condition.

The anemic growth in imports had been a puzzle for some, including President Macapagal-Arroyo, especially because the economy has been growing faster than expected.

The President earlier questioned the reported slower-than-expected rise in imports, which was used by the Bureau of Customs as an excuse to explain away shortfalls in the collection of import duties.

Imports in January to September reached $40.08 billion, growing by 4.4 percent over last year's. This kept the economy off track to meet the initially expected imports growth of 12 percent and the revised forecast of 10 percent for the full year.

The lower-than-expected rise in imports came about despite the 7.1-percent growth of the overall economy in the first three quarters, beating most expectations.

The slow growth in imports also came about despite the accelerated rise in consumer spending.

Beltran said, a better-than-expected economic growth and rise in consumer spending normally push imports to grow much faster.

It used to be that the elasticity of imports growth to increase in consumer spending was at 1.8 percent, meaning imports was growing by 1.8 percent for every one-percent growth in personal consumption, he added.

However, latest figures no longer reflect this correlation. Personal consumption in the first three quarters of the year grew by 5.8 percent, but imports growth during the period settled at only 4.4 percent.

"If the elasticity was still true, imports should have grown by over 10 percent already," Beltran said. "But consumers now spend more on domestically produced or rendered goods and services."

The growth in personal consumption in the first three quarters of the year was faster than the 5.3 percent recorded in the same period last year. For the third quarter alone, personal consumption grew 5.6 percent.

Peso still rising, now at 41.58 to $1

From page B1

Dec. 11 (Monday night, Manila time). Most have bet on a 25 basis-point cut in the targeted funds rate but turned cautious on the possibility that the US central bank may cut interest rates more aggressively.

On the other hand, lower US interest rates tend to drive funds to high-yielding Asian assets, which in turn could exert more upward pressure on Asian currencies like the peso unless local central banks match the monetary easing.

Volume at the Philippine Dealing System rose to $466 million from last Friday's $306.5 million.

Aside from stronger foreign investments in local stocks, the peso has been rising in the last few weeks due to remittances from overseas Filipino workers supporting local households. With the sharply appreciating peso, bankers said overseas Filipino workers paid in currencies that were depreciating like the US dollar were prompted to send more foreign exchange to meet the same budget.

Based on government data, the United States is the biggest source of overseas employment at 42 percent, followed by the Middle East and Asia with 21 percent each, while Europe had 11 percent.

In terms of remittance volume, the United States was still noted to be the biggest contributor with a 59-percent share, followed by Middle East and Europe with 13 percent each, and Asia with 11 percent.

Monthly remittances flowing to the country have exceeded the $1-billion mark since May 2006

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Japan machinery orders up in Oct.

TOKYO—JAPANESE CORE MAchinery orders rose more than expected in October but sentiment among service sector workers fell to a 4-1/2-year low, suggesting that firm corporate activity has yet to be felt by households.

Both reports did little to alter views that the Bank of Japan will not raise interest rates until late next year as it fears that shaky global markets and a slowdown in the US economy, hit by subprime woes, could hurt Japan's export-reliant growth.

Core private-sector machinery orders, a volatile but closely watched indicator of capital spending in the coming six to nine months, rose 12.7 percent from September, government data showed on Monday.

The rise was almost twice as high as economists' median forecast for a 7.0-percent increase and followed a 7.6-percent drop in September, although slowing construction could curb future spending.

"It was a strong figure, with rises spreading through many sectors," said Yasuhiro Onakado, chief economist at Daiwa SB Investments. "It eases worries about downward pressure on future capital spending despite lingering uncertainty over the economic outlook."

The BOJ has said it will need to raise Japan's super-low interest rates back to more normal levels to avoid economic overheating, but jitters over a global credit squeeze have made it difficult to justify such a move.

Adding to worries for the BOJ, a government survey showed workers close to consumer and retail trends were increasingly pessimistic about economic conditions.

An index measuring sentiment among Japan's service sector workers fell to 38.8 in November, marking the lowest level since May 2003, the Cabinet Office survey showed on Monday.

The outlook index, indicating the level of confidence in future conditions, also fell to 38.8, the lowest since March 2003.

Reuters

CHINESE shoppers buy clothes at a street market selling factory rejects, in Shenyang, in northeast China's Liaoning province. China's producer or wholesale prices picked up in November, the latest indicator that inflation is rising fast in the world's fourth largest economy, even as China's leadership underscores its concerns about an economy that continues to grow too fast and as inflation has picked up speed over recent months. AFP

Stocks slip on US Fed concerns

Hopes of an aggressive rate cut fade

SYDNEY—ASIAN STOCKS SLIPPED YESterday while the dollar climbed to a fresh one-month high against the yen as hopes for an aggressive US interest rate cut this week waned after stronger-than-expected US jobs data.

Worries that slower US growth will crimp demand sent oil sliding below $88 a barrel, which in turn kept gold pinned below $800 an ounce.

A slightly better-than-expected US employment report on Friday had dashed hopes of a half-percentage point rate cut at the Dec. 11 Federal Reserve meeting, but also soothed fears that the world's biggest economy would fall into recession.

Investors were generally cautious ahead of the Fed meeting outcome as well as key data such as Japan's December tankan survey of corporate sentiment due at the end of the week.

"This is a very important week in terms of indicators and events, so everyone's waiting for clues to the health of both the US and Japanese economies," said Masayoshi Okamoto, head of dealing at Jujiya Securities.

Tokyo's Nikkei average ended 0.2 percent lower, while MSCI's measure of other Asia Pacific stocks fell 0.7 percent by early yesterday afternoon, taking a breather after last week's 1.9-percent rise.

The MSCI index is about 8 percent away from the Nov. 1 record high, and has rallied nearly 37 percent this year, strongly outperforming a 12.4-percent rise for MSCI's key world stock index "if the Fed eases and takes some pressure off, that could provide some spur," said Hans Kunnen, head of investment markets research at Colonial First State in Sydney.

Shanghai stocks were the top performers among major regional markets, climbing more than one percent as investors bet the an aggressive one-percentage point hike in bank reserve ratios announced on Saturday would lessen the chances of a follow-up interest rate hike.

Investors sold energy firms on concerns that lower oil prices will hurt their profits. US crude was trading just below $88 a barrel, well off the peak near $100 set on Nov. 26.

Japan's Inpex Holdings, Australian oil and gas producer Woodside Petroleum and PetroChina all fell more than one percent.

Investors also took profits on some of the recent gainers, sending chip tester maker Advantest Corp, Hynix Semiconductor and SMIC lower.

But SP Ausnet jumped after the Australian infrastructure firm pulled out of a $7.3-billion plan to buy assets from former energy firm Alinta due to a downturn in capital market.

SP Ausnet's Australian shares surged nearly 8 percent, while the Singapore-listed shares gained 6 percent.

Also in demand, takeover-target Rio Tinto advanced nearly one percent after Britain's Daily Telegraph newspaper reported that investment group Blackstone was planning a counterbid for the global miner with a consortium.

In the forex market, the dollar briefly hit a one-month high of about 111.87 yen before paring gains, while the euro eased to $1.4642 from Friday's high near $1.4672.

"At the moment, bearish sentiment for the dollar appears to be receding," said Tomoko Fujii, a senior economist and strategist at Bank of America in Tokyo.

Reuters

UBS makes $10-B surprise writedown

ZURICH—SWISS BANK UBS unveiled $10 billion in shock subprime writedowns yesterday and said it had obtained an emergency capital injection from a Singapore government entity and an unnamed Middle East investor.

UBS, which has been severely battered by the US subprime mortgage meltdown, issued a profit warning and canceled plans for a cash dividend in moves expected to batter the stock and the banking sector as a whole.

The $10-billion charge was one of the largest writedowns by any global bank since the subprime crisis broke and was the latest sign of the devastation that the meltdown has brought to some of the world's largest financial institutions.

The Singapore investment, which gives the Asian island-state a 9-percent stake in UBS, was the latest case of a rescue of a top western bank by a sovereign wealth fund, after the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority bought a $7.5-billion stake in Citigroup.

UBS shares were expected to open sharply lower with investors poised to sell the stock because of an anticipated dilution of their share of earnings.

"The level of dilution is very significant," said Omar Fall, an analyst at ABN Amro in London.

UBS said it had made a 13-billion Swiss franc ($11.48 billion) issue of fresh capital, 11 billion francs of which were to be placed with the Government of Singapore Investment Corporation (GIC) and 2 billion francs with a Middle East investor.

A financial source said the Middle East investor was believed to be the government of Oman.

The announcement comes on the eve of an investor day in London on Tuesday at which UBS chief executive Marcel Rohner and other top managers are due to address analysts and investors.

The bank also said it would approve the resale of 36.4-million treasury shares previously intended for cancellation, increasing Tier 1 capital by about 2 billion francs.

Reuters

Oil retreats; eyes on modest Fed rate cut

SINGAPORE—OIL SLID TO $88 A BARREL yesterday, extending losses on expectations that a modest Federal Reserve interest rate cut would support the ailing dollar.

US light, sweet crude futures fell 22 cents a barrel to $88.06 in Globex electronic trading by early yesterday afternoon, extending Friday's nearly $2 drop. Prices ended some 37 cents lower on the week, but traded in a wide range of about $5.

London Brent crude fell 16 cents to $88.48 a barrel.

"The fall in the oil price appeared to be more of a continuation of the choppy trading pattern of recent days rather than the result of significant oil market news," said Commonwealth Bank of Australia analyst David Moore.

Markets are now pricing in a quarter-point cut, a factor that helped support the dollar near a one-month high against the yen on Monday.

A weaker dollar makes most commodities cheaper to buy for non-dollar investors.

The world's second largest oil consumer, China, moved aggressively at the weekend to curb inflation and prevent the economy from overheating by raising its bank reserve ratio by a full-percentage point to a record 14.5 percent—its biggest such move in nearly four years.

After Opec's decision last week to leave production levels unchanged for the moment, many analysts expected more range-bound trade to prevail heading toward the holiday season.

Some energy experts have said Opec's output levels are not enough to stem sliding crude inventories and could trigger a crunch when heating demand peaks this winter.

US stockpiles of crude oil dropped last week to their lowest since early 2005. But inventories of refined fuel in the world's largest energy consumer rose during the same week thanks to higher imports and a boost in domestic production.

Market speculators have pared their bullish bets as oil prices fall further from their record high of $99.29 on Nov. 21.

Noncommercial investors cut their net long positions in the New York Mercantile Exchange (Nymex) crude oil futures contract by 12,000 lots to 47,072 lots in the week to Dec. 4.

Reuters

US, China find ways to work together to fight protectionism

BEIJING—THE UNITED STATES AND China, with increasingly dependent economies, have to work together to fight protectionist sentiment in both countries, officials from the countries said Monday.

The comments came on the eve of high-level meetings this week between US Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson and Chinese officials at which China's massive trade surplus with the US and its product safety record are expected to be key issues.

"We have to continue opening global markets. America and China must work together to stem the tide of projectionist sentiment in out nations," said US Secretary of Commerce Carlos Gutierrez.

"It is ironic that we have found that protectionism does not protect. The only thing that does protect is innovation and engaging with the world, competing, being more productive," Gutierrez told a seminar on innovation in Beijing.

Gutierrez also pointed to China's reputation for lax enforcement of intellectual property rights, calling for "consistent, transparent and equitable" rules to guarantee that innovation will not be stifled.

Congress has been demanding the US administration act more forcefully to get China to halt what critics see as unfair trade practices. They contend China is manipulating its currency to keep the value low to boost Chinese imports into the United States while making US goods more expensive in China, inflating the US trade deficit with China, which last year reached a record $233 billion (euro159 billion).

US Health Secretary Mike Leavitt said China and Western countries needed to cooperate because the global market had changed so much that governments had lagged behind in regulation their booming trade.

"Our systems our different and yet we need to achieve a common result ... it's a question of building bridges," Leavitt said in a separate speech to the American Chamber of Commerce in Beijing.

Their comments were echoed by published remarks from Chinese officials.

Finance Minister Xie Xuren said in an interview with the official Xinhua News Agency that the protectionist sentiment in the US Congress was alarming.

He added the passage of such legislation would "seriously harm China-US trade cooperation, and in the end, harm America's own interests."

Vice Commerce Minister Chen Deming was also quoted Monday in the official China Daily as saying the trade disputes with the United States should be resolved through talks.

He said a narrow focus on the value of the yuan and intellectual property rights risked "hindering the normal development" of trade links.

AP

Dow Jones in final days before Murdoch group takes over

NEW YORK—BY THE END OF this week, the world's best-known chronicle of capitalism, The Wall Street Journal, will be owned by another company—something many thought would never happen.

For more than a century, the Journal's parent company, Dow Jones & Co., was controlled by the Bancroft family, descendants of Clarence Barron, one of the earliest owners of the storied financial publishing company.

The family was long seen as unified in opposition to selling and at first rebuffed the extremely rich offer from Rupert Murdoch's News Corp., which valued the company at more than $5 billion (euro3.4 billion), well above where Dow Jones stock was trading.

In the end, Murdoch won over enough family members to acquire Dow Jones and its flagship paper. News Corp. formally seals the deal with a vote by Dow Jones shareholders Thursday, but the outcome is assured since enough of the Bancrofts have entered binding commitments of support.

The deal should close quickly because it has already received the necessary regulatory approvals.

Guessing how the sale will affect the paper has been the main topic in the US publishing industry since Aug. 1, when the agreement was announced.

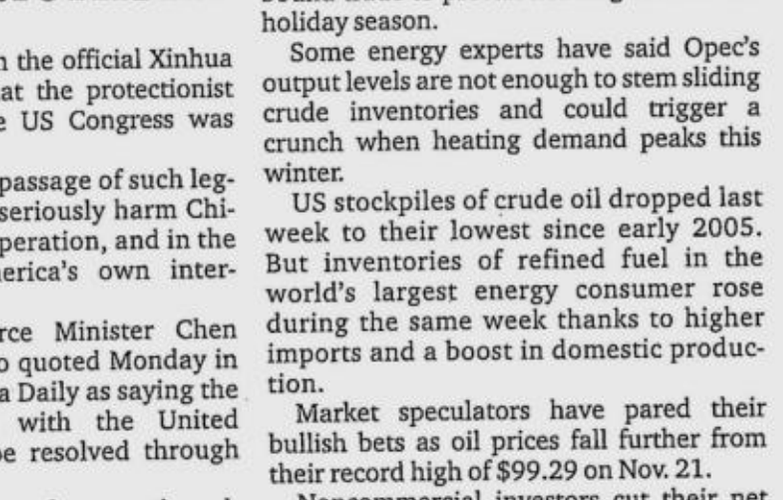
The first hints came late last week, when News Corp. appointed a new management team for Dow Jones, including longtime News Corp. publishing executive Les Hinton as CEO and Robert Thomson, editor of the Murdoch-owned Times of London, as publisher.

As Murdoch announced the new Dow Jones leadership, he also clarified the line of succession at News Corp., naming his 34-year-old son James to a new senior role overseeing the media conglomerate's operations in Asia and Europe, putting him clearly in line to succeed his father, who is 76.

The younger Murdoch will also rejoin News Corp.'s board and relinquish his post as CEO of British Sky Broadcasting Group PLC, a satellite TV company in which News Corp. owns a 39-percent stake.

Even before the official handover to News Corp., Dow Jones has been moving to further transform itself and lessen its reliance on traditional newspaper advertising, which is widely seen as a threatened revenue source as ad dollars move to the Internet.

Murdoch has given some general indications about his plans for the Journal but has declined to go into detail. He has said that he wants to greatly expand the paper's Washington and national coverage in order to compete more aggressively against The New York Times and that he wants to expand the Journal's operations online. *AP*



NEWS CORPORATION CEO Rupert Murdoch, right, stands with Les Hinton after attending a service in central London. News Corp. early confirmed that Hinton will become chief executive of Dow Jones & Co. Inc. when News Corp. completes its $5.6-billion acquisition. AP

People, Events & Products

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Editor Aries Espinosa

Personal finance program for Cebu College students

A TYPICAL COLLEGE STUDENT saves his allowance for certain wants: apparel, cell phone load, internet/PC gaming, gigs etc. Although the instinct to save is present, everything is set for the short term. While most of them are fast approaching the end of their collegiate years, few have a grasp of the concept of saving and the necessary skills for managing their personal finances. As professionals, most end up overspending for wants rather than needs, their mindset being "to earn and to buy their dream toy".

Managing personal finance is an important life skill, though it is not part of any curriculum in the Philippine educational system. The earlier the youth learns this skill, the better their chances are of a comfortable and secure life in 20 to 30 years.

To address this, the Colayco Foundation for Education Inc (CFE), publisher of the bestsellers "Wealth Within Your Reach", "Making your Money Work" and "Pera Palaguin Workbook" (Francisco J. Colayco PhD) and the Citigroup Foundation, launched Hatch, a program that aims to teach personal finance to college students and widen their eyes on the subject of why and how to save for the future.

Since its launch last August, over 4,000 students from Colegio San Juan de Letran, University of Santo Tomas, University of the Philippines-Diliman, De La Salle University-College of Saint Benilde, St. Paul University Manila, Far Eastern University, Philippine Women's University, National University, San Beda College, Ateneo De Manila University and Miriam College, have benefited from the program.

To culminate the program, CFE brought Hatch to seven universities in Cebu where over 3,000 students attended. Participating in this program were UP Cebu and Southwestern University Nov. 14, University of the Visayas Nov 15, Cebu Normal University and Cebu Institute of Medicine Nov 16, and University of Cebu and University of San Carlos Nov 17. Armand Bengco, CFE executive director, and Jennifer Ursua, Hatch program director, conducted the seminars.

'PINOY@WORK' BOOK LAUNCH
The Ateneo Center for Organization and Development (CORD) recently launched a book titled 'Pinoy@Work', a compilation of the best survey-based articles on workplace trends and issues published in the People at Work subsection of the Philippine Daily Inquirer from 2001 to 2007 at the MVP Center for Student Leadership at the Ateneo de Manila University. Shown are (from left) INQUIRER president and CEO Sandy Prieto-Romualdez, who delivered the inspirational message, 'Pinoy@Work' editors Gina Hechanova, Reggie Reyes, Edna Franco and INQUIRER senior vice president Rene Reinoso.

TeleTech in RP reaches 15,000 workforce

TELETECH, THE LARGEST AND fastest growing BPO company in the Philippines, announced it has officially surpassed its target of 15,000 workers in the Philippines across its 10 delivery centers.

Maulik Parekh, vice president and general manager for Asia, said the company has reached this milestone last month and is continuing to hire people towards the end of the year.

"We still continue to hire and will probably add over 200 people before the end of the year." Parekh said.

Since it began operating in the Philippines in 2002, TeleTech has consistently increased its investments in the country. Unlike other BPO companies that flock to mega Manila, TeleTech has pioneered "Bringing jobs to the people" strategy and has chosen to invest in the countryside, into second-tier cities such as Bacoor (Cavite), Lipa City (Batangas), Bacolod (Negros Occidental) and Cainta (Rizal).

Parekh noted that TeleTech's strategy is in line with the government's goal of growing business process outsourcing (BPO), dubbed as the country's sunshine industry, into more areas and provide employment opportunities that benefit many Filipinos.

"We are set to open facilities in San Fernando (Pampanga) with over 1,700 seats and in Sta. Rosa (Laguna) with close to 1,000 seats. We plan on opening these new facilities during the first half of next year," Parekh added.

MAULIK Parekh

Contributing to TeleTech's tremendous growth in the last five years, he gave credit to the excellent support the company has received from all levels of government.

Globally, TeleTech operates over 80 customer management centers in 17 countries. According to Parekh, the Philippine operation is one of the fastest growing among the TeleTech network.

"This reflects the Filipino workers' customer service skills, language skills, and impeccable work ethic. All of these factors account for TeleTech's expansion and growth in the country," he said.

TeleTech's next goal, according to Parekh, is to increase the head count in the Philippines further to 25,000 employees over the next two years. During this period, he anticipates TeleTech to open anywhere between four to eight more facilities.

"We firmly believe we can achieve this target. Based on studies, the total addressable BPO market worldwide is about $450 billion. As a global industry, we are nowhere even near that right now. There is plenty of room for growth."

Etihad appoints VP for sales

ETIHAD AIRWAYS, ONE OF THE LEADING carriers being patronized by thousands of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) leaving for or returning to the Middle East, has appointed Adrian Parkes as its new vice president for sales.

Based at Etihad's head office near Abu Dhabi airport, Adrian will report to Geert Boven, Etihad Airways' executive vice president sales and services, and will be responsible for the airline's sales strategy, activities and performance.

ADRIAN Parkes

Boven said: "It is great to be welcoming Adrian to Etihad Airways and I look forward to working closely with him in his new role. He has a wealth of experience in the airline industry which will be hugely valuable in the further development of Etihad's sales activities." Adrian joins Etihad from British carrier, bmi, where he spent 11 years and held the positions of commercial director, sales director and general sales manager.

During his time with bmi he was responsible for global sales and marketing of the bmi brand and the airline's communication and online strategy, revenue management, pricing and network scheduling.

Demand regularly outstrips supply on the Abu Dhabi to Manila service, especially in the economy cabin which averages 90-percent capacity. Etihad Airways flies to Abu Dhabi from Manila daily.

St. Bridget School QC benefit dance concert

THE ST. BRIDGET SCHOOL, QUEZON City, grade and high school dance clubs will stage "Dance for Life", a benefit dance concert for the benefit of the Bukid Kabataan Center.

The Bukid Kabataan Center is situated at General Trias, Cavite. It houses children aged 7 to 16 who are victims of sexual and physical abuse. They are abandoned and orphaned and have lived in the streets for some time. The center provides spiritual and value-formation, group living, special education, and psychological and psychiatric treatments. It is being sustained by the Religious of the Good Shepherd Sisters.

The concert will be held on Dec. 14, Friday at 7 p.m. at the school auditorium. Tickets are available at the school's business office for P100 only. For more details, call 913-6410.

TEXAS EAGLE GOLF CARS LANDS ON RP GREENS
Golf aficionados gathered at Fort Bonifacio High Street Dec. 4 to witness the Philippine launching of Texas Eagle, a new line of electric-powered golf cars and utility vehicles. Texas Eagle is exclusively distributed in the country by The Turf Company who has been in the business of quality golf equipments. Shown (from left) are Mario Lopez, general manager of The Turf Company, and Bill Stelton, chair of The Turf Company, which donated a Texas Eagle police car to the City of Taguig. Receiving the Texas Police Car are Taguig Mayor Sigfrido Tinga, Vice Mayor George Elias, and Taguig Chief of Police Col. Alfred Corpus.

Bulacan water project to benefit 3M

SINCE 1920, ANGAT DAM IN Norzagaray, Bulacan has been the major source of potable water for 14 million Metro Manilans. Ironically though, the people of Bulacan have not been able to utilize this precious resource as they continue to draw water using deep wells.

Recent reports from the groundwater study made by the National Water Resources Board (NWRB), however, revealed that the groundwater aquifers sustaining these wells are on the verge of depletion due to overabstraction which has resulted into saltwater intrusion in some areas.

In reality, the province of Bulacan is already included as part of the service area of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) by virtue of the Memorandum of Agreement signed between MWSS, the provincial government of Bulacan and the Local Water Utilities Administration (LWUA) more than 15 years ago. As such, MWSS is committed to provide the water requirements of the province with about 230 million liters per day (mld) supply allocated to Bulacan with the completion of the Umiray-Angat Transbasin Project (UATP) in 2001.

The Bulacan Water Supply Master Plan was conceived to meet the demand of the increasing population and industrialization of the province. The P11-billion project is touted to be the biggest infrastructure project for Bulacan. With the province standing to benefit from the total development package that includes a P250-million development fund, a P10-million annual development assistance, a P10-million annual fee for use of water right and P5-million annual fee for each of the host towns of Norzagaray and Doña Remedios Trinidad.

The water supply project for the province will be implemented in three phases with Phase 1, the Bulacan Bulk Water Supply Project to be implemented from 2008 to 2010, initially benefiting eight towns comprising of Marilao, Malolos, Sta. Maria, Bustos, Balagtas, Bocaue, Bulacan, Guiguinto and Pandi.

Phase 2 or the Angat River Development Program to be implemented from 2012 to 2013 will provide water to the additional five towns of Angat, Norzagaray, San Rafael, Baliwag and Bustos.

Finally, Phase 3 of the plan or the Bulacan Bulk Expansion, set to be done from 2015 to 2017, will benefit the remaining 12 towns of Bulacan.

The water project is estimated to generate 10,000 jobs for Bulakeños, and once completed, will further boost commerce and industry in the province.

SHARON PROMOTES PINOY SUPERMARKET
The Philippines' most sought-after commercial endorser, Sharon Cuneta, is promoting Seafood City through a music television video which will start airing Dec. 12 throughout the continental United States. Directed by the multi-awarded Mark Meily, with a song jingle composed by the 'maestro' Ryan Cayabyab, the video commercial is a celebration of the time-honored Filipino values. Shown during the signing rites are (from left): Jose V. Hontiveros, executive vice president and general manager of Seafood City; Sharon Cuneta, and Marie Morata-Tan, general manager of CompetitivEdge, the agency for Seafood City.

JCI Manila launches search for 60 youth leaders

JUNIOR CHAMBER INTERNATIONAL-Manila (JCI-Manila), Asia's first and premier leadership development organization for young leaders and entrepreneurs, in cooperation with the International Visitors Program Philippines (IVP) and sponsored by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the United States Department of State through the Center for Southeast Asian Studies and the International Training Office, Northern Illinois University, Dekalb, shall be launching the first "Search for Sixty Youth Leaders" project.

This unique undertaking shall involve 60 fortunate promising youth leaders, and out of the 60, 30 youth leaders will have the opportunity to travel to the United States, with an all-expense paid package.

The participants shall be given the chance to sharpen their skills in designing concrete action plans, set up internships with local government offices, NGOs and civic organizations to gain first-hand experience in civic participation, volunteerism, networking and community leadership.

The program is looking for young leaders from 25 to 35 years of age, with at least 2 to 3 years of work experience, must have a baccalaureate degree, and has had active involvement in projects related to training youth to be responsible citizens and in civic projects or community service or outreach experience.

Interested applicants may secure their application forms from JCI-Manila headquarters at Arquiza corner Grey Streets, Ermita, Manila or e-mail JC Williamson Nocom at williamson@pldtdsl.net, call 0917-8994647 or 0922-8994647.

Applications forms should be submitted before the deadline of Dec. 14; applications by mail should be postmarked not later than Dec. 15. For more inquiries, get in touch with Bonny at 400-8716, fax 400-3970, 0922-8333282, e-mail jovy.obico@dinsmorpromo.com.

Inaul Fashion Show Dec. 15 to 21

BEAUTIFUL LADIES AGED 18 to 21 will vie for the crown in Mutya Sa Shariff Kabunsuan, the newest highlight of the festivities in the Shariff Kabunsuan Festival in Cotabato City. To be held at the Cotabato City Institute Gym as part of the week-long festival's numerous activities, this unique beauty pageant will feature the contestants clad in traditional Muslim wear like the Inaul Malong. From Dec. 15 to 21, Cotabatenos will once again witness the exciting Guinakit Fluvial Parade, where colorful bancas will parade along the Rio Grande de Mindanao. There is also the Kuyog Street Dancing, to be participated in by hundreds of elementary and high school students who will once again display their prowess in cultural dance. Other cultural presentations, culinary competitions, and other artistic shows are also part of the festivities. The Festival is held every third week of December in Cotabato City to commemorate the arrival of the Arab-Malay missionary Shariff Kabunsuan in the 16th century who introduced Islam to the people of Mindanao.

PSHS, PLDT present 'Bravissimo!!!'

ON DEC. 18, THE PHILIPPINE Madrigal Singers will perform at a gala concert-"Bravissimo!!!" at the CCP Main Theatre.

The Madz, as they are affectionately called by legions of their loyal fans, recently won the European Grand Prix for Choral Singing in Arrezzo, Italy, last August. They are the only choir in the world that has ever achieved the feat since the inception of the competition in 1989. The event shall be their only gala performance at the CCP this December.

The concert will feature songs that helped the Madrigal Singers win the European Grand Prix for Choral Singing in 1997 and 2007. It will also feature Christmas songs, both traditional and contemporary, to help launch the coming holiday season on a festive, musical note.

Net proceeds of the event will go to the Philippine Science High School Natatanging Guro Endowment Fund. The fund's goal is to help maintain high standards of learning at the Philippines' premiere institution for secondary science and mathematics education. Income from the fund will help provide financial incentives, study and research grants, and faculty exchange programs: all geared towards achieving world-class teaching excellence at PSHS. "Bravissimo!!!" is made possible by PLDT Landline Plus in cooperation with Campaigns & Bridges Inc. For tickets, call Ticketworld or Campaigns & Bridges at 840-1593.

St. Mary's '68/'72 slates homecoming Dec. 29

THE ST. MARY'S CLASS '68/'72 ALUMNI ASSOCIATION INC IS CALLing on all elementary graduates of 1968 and high school graduates of 1972 of St. Mary's College in Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya for its Jade/Coral Jubilee Alumni Homecoming on Dec. 29 at the high school quadrangle, and anniversary dinner at the Saber Inn Pavilion. The souvenir program and directory are currently being prepared. For more details, get in touch with Beth Meniado-Buiser at 637-5400, 0917-8172384 or Prescy Ong-Marcos at 078-3212211/13, 0917-2565269.

LCCM, JABIC LAUNCH NIHONGO PROGRAM

True to its commitment toward the enhancement of its role as a conduit to learning, culture and goodwill in the international community, La Consolacion College Manila, through its Foreign Language Center (FLC), is announcing the start of the Nihongo Program in partnership with the Jabic International Corp. The formal launch is set for Dec. 12 at the LCCM Adelaide Hall. It will be attended by faculty, students and other interested individuals. At this activity, a short description of the Nihongo curriculum will be presented by a representative of Jabic. Classes are now being organized toward a 60-hour program that will start in the first week of January 2008. For more information, call the LCCM Admissions office, 313-0513 local 150 or at the FLC 313-0521 or write to LCCM #8 Mendiola, San Miguel, Manila.

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National/Citizenship	Position
LEARNINGLITZ, INC. Rm. 209-215 Peninsula Court, 8735 Makati Ave. cor. Paseo de Roxas, Makati City	Michael Dwayne Martin American	Local Manager of Instruction
TEEKAY SHIPPING PHILIPPINES, INC. 3/F Alvion Center, Thailand St., Legaspi Village, Makati City	Colin Andrew Barr British	Safety in Action Trainer
FULLER LIFE DIRECT SELLING PHILS., INC. 2288 Don Chino Roces Ave. Extension, Makati City	Carlos Jose Mendes Campos Lopes Portuguese	National Sales Director
IBM BUSINESS SERVICES INC Cyber One Mall, Eastwood City, Libis, Quezon City	Patrick James O' Connell American	Senior Project Executive
SOLID MASTER PLASTIC ENT. CORP. 206 Peroxide Compound, Maysan Rd., Valenzuela City	Woke Hong Chinese	General Manager
SAMLYNLAM GRILL G/F Unit LSI-27 to BCI-19 South Station Mall, Alabang-Zapote Rd., Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Jiun-Wei Lee Taiwanese	Operations Manager
SPACE GROUP PHILS., INC. U-1407 & 1408 Taipan Place, Emerald Ave., Ortigas Ctr., Pasig City	Jong Sug Han Korean	Manager
SPACE GROUP PHILS., INC. U-1407 & 1408 Taipan Place, Emerald Ave., Ortigas Ctr., Pasig City	Ji Hyeong Kim Korean	Architect
PHIL. ORIENTAL SPIRIT TRAVEL & TOURS CORP. 600 S & L Bldg., 1500 Roxas Blvd., Ermita, Manila	Yeooul Lee Korean	Tour Manager
SOLID MASTER PLASTIC ENT. CORP. 206 Peroxide Comp., Maysan Rd., Valenzuela City	Jianfeng Hong Chinese	Inspector
ZMG SIGNIUM WARD HOWELL, INC. 5/F The Athenaeum Bldg., 160 Leviste St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	John Anthony Udovich American	Consultant
CHINA STATE CONSTRUCTION ENGINEERING CORPORATION Unit 3101 Orient Square Bldg., Emerald Ave., Ortigas Ctr., Pasig City	Zhaozhi Li Chinese	Civil Engineer
FHIL.SLK CORPORATION B7 L12 F Legaspi St., Parkwood Phase 1, Maybunga, Pasig City	Chijun Kim Korean	General Manager
GAMINGWEB INC. 17/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Edward Bennett Scott British	Sports-book Operations Manager
C & S DEFENSE-PHILIPPINES, INC. 909 B Paragon Plaza, 162 EDSA, Mandaluyong City	Ik Jae Lee Korean	President
CONNECTIVITY FACTORS AND ACCESS, INC. Basement 1, Export Bank Plaza, Chino Roces Ave., Makati City	Chengwen Li Chinese	Sales Manager
CONNECTIVITY FACTORS AND ACCESS, INC. Basement 1, Export Bank Plaza, Chino Roces Ave., Makati City	Changguo Che Chinese	Operation Manager
YUNWA TRADING CO. LTD. 1190 Mayhaligue St., Tondo, Manila	Zhuqun Chen Chinese	Supervisor
YUNWA TRADING CO. LTD. 1190 Mayhaligue St., Tondo, Manila	Pong Chong Chao Chinese	Marketing Supervisor
YUNWA TRADING CO. LTD. 1190 Mayhaligue St., Tondo, Manila	Qizao Su Chinese	Technical Supervisor
VERTEC TRADING LTD. CO. 494 Quintin Paredes St., Binondo, Manila	Baorui Xu Chinese	Office Manager
VERTEC TRADING LTD. CO. 494 Quintin Paredes St., Binondo, Manila	Xingyan Xie Chinese	Operation Manager
VERTEC TRADING LTD. CO. 494 Quintin Paredes St., Binondo, Manila	Congying Huang Chinese	Supervisor
FORTUNE APPAREL, INC. F. Manalo cor. G. Raymundo Sts., Bambang, Pasig City	Babloo Pal Indian	VP-Marketing
ROBINSONS LAND CORPORATION L2 Robinsons Galleria EDSA cor. Ortigas Ave., Ugong Norte, Quezon City	Eti Rusmiata Indonesian	Front Office Manager

If you have any information/objection to the above mentioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

RAYMUNDO G. AGRAVANTE
OIC, Regional Director

(PDI – Dec. 11, 2007)

PHILIPPINE ECONOMIC ZONE AUTHORITY
Baguio Economic Zone, Loakan Road, Baguio City
Tel. Nos. 447-3331; 447-3683; 447-3328; 447-3329; 447-3333; 447-1155
Telefax: 447-3330

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Philippine Economic Zone Authority – Baguio City Economic Zone, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites eligible bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project : Security Services' Contract for the Baguio City Economic Zone
Location : BCEZ, Loakan Road, Baguio City
Approved Budget for the Contract : P 4,569,096.78
Contract Duration : One Year

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project, within the last 3 years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding, and have key personnel and equipment (owned, leased or under purchase) available for the prosecution of the project. The list of minimum equipment requirement is indicated in the Eligibility Forms. The Eligibility Check/ Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted. Bids received in excess of the ABC will be automatically rejected.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	December 12-18, 2007
2. Pre-Bid Conference	December 18, 2007, 9:00 AM
3. Submission of Bids	January 8, 2008, 9:00 AM
4. Opening of Bids	January 8, 2008, 9:30 AM

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Two Thousand Pesos (P2,000.00). The method of payment will be cash basis only.

Bidders should not have any existing security services contract with any PEZA-BCEZ locators to avoid conflict of interest.

In addition, bidders must have filed their latest annual income and business tax returns (VAT) and/ or Percentage Tax) covering six (6) months immediately prior to the Submission of bids via the Electronic Filing and Payment System (eFPS) of the BIR.

The PEZA reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process and assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

(Sgd.) Engr. MODESTO L. AGYAO, JR.
BAC Chairman

(PDI – December 4 & 10, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Agriculture
FERTILIZER AND PESTICIDE AUTHORITY
FPA Bldg., BAI Compound, Visayas Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. 9223371, 9223362, 9273647, 9282538, Telefax 9223355, 9208238
E-mail address: fpa_77@yahoo.com, website: http://fpa.da.gov.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) invites interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following project:

PROCUREMENT OF THREE (3) PICK-UP TYPE VEHICLES

Any four-wheel pick-up type vehicle with fully imported chassis and body

2 units — double cab 4x2 diesel engine displacement not exceeding 3000 cc standard wheel Rim 15

1 unit — double cab 4x2 diesel engine displacement not exceeding 3000 cc, aircon AM/FM stereo/disc player, 245/70R16/Aluminum 16"X7.0

APPROVED BUDGET FOR THE CONTRACT: PhP 2,475,000.00

1. The bidding shall be open and competitive applying the non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria in eligibility check and preliminary examination of bids. Post qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

Schedule of Activities.

BAC Activities	Date/Time	Place
Issuance of Bidding Documents	Dec. 5-17, 2007	BAC Secretariat, 2nd Flr., FPA Building
Pre-bid Conference	Dec. 17, 2007 10:00 am	BAC Secretariat, 2nd Flr., FPA Building
Submission and opening of eligibility envelope/eligibility check, Submission and opening of bids	Dec. 28, 2007 10:00 am	BAC Secretariat, 2nd Flr., FPA Building

2. Prospective bidders may obtain further information from the BAC Secretariat and inspect Bidding Documents at the above address during office hours.
3. Particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations
4. A complete set of Bidding Documents will be available to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P 2,000.00 in cash.
5. FPA-BAC reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process and to reject all Bids at any time prior to the award of contract without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder.

(Sgd.) Dr. DARIO C. SABULARSE
Deputy Executive Director
BAC Chairman

(PDI - Dec. 11, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
PHILIPPINE RECLAMATION AUTHORITY
(Public Estates Authority)
7th floor, Legaspi Towers 200 Bldg., 107 Paseo de Roxas St.,
Legaspi Village, 1226 City of Makati
Tel. Nos. (02) 817-4711 to 13; (02) 813-1441 to 45 • Facsimile No.: (02) 815-2662
Website: www.pea.gov.ph • Email info@pea.gov.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

SECURITY SERVICES FOR PRA PROPERTIES (Goods 07-020)

1. The Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA), through its corporate budget intends to apply the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) in the sum of **Nine Million Six Hundred Thirty Nine Thousand Three Hundred Pesos (Php 9,639,300.00)**, inclusive of VAT, to payments under the contract for the **SECURITY SERVICES FOR PRA PROPERTIES.** Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The PRA now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the above-project. The properties are located in various areas of Metro Manila. The contract will be for one (1) year. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II and Annex A of Section III of the Bidding Documents.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act." Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the BAC Secretariat and inspect the Bidding Documents starting **December 21, 2007** from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased from **December 21 to January 4, 2008** by interested Bidders from the BAC Secretariat and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of **Nine Thousand Six Hundred Fifty Pesos (P9,650.00).** The method of payment will be cash or check payable to PRA. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. The PRA will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on **January 7, 2008** at 2:00 PM at the PRA Conference Room, 8th Floor Legaspi Towers 200, Paseo de Roxas, Makati City.
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the PRA (7th Floor) Office on or before **January 21, 2008** at 1:15 P.M. (PRA wall clock time). All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form and amount indicated in the BDS. Late Bids shall not be accepted.
8. Bid opening shall be on **January 21, 2008** at 1:30 P.M. at the PRA Conference Room, 8th Floor Legaspi Towers 200, Paseo de Roxas, Makati City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend.
9. Prospective Bidders should have undertaken a project or contract within the last (2) years of the same kind with a contract price of at least 50% of the ABC.
10. Pursuant to BIR Revenue Regulations 03-2005, all prospective bidders are mandated to file their income and business tax returns electronically using the Electronic Filing and Payment System (EFPS).
11. The PRA assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.
12. The PRA reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) JAIME R. MILLAN
BAC Chairman

(PDI – December 11 & 17, 2007)

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National Power Corporation

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The National Power Corporation (NPC), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites consultants to apply for eligibility and short listing and if found eligible and short listed, to bid for the hereunder project.

Name of Project : Consulting Services for the Development and Implementation of the NPC Executive Information System (NPC-EIS)

Brief Description : Deliver a fully-functional enterprises Executive Information System (EIS) comprising of packaged application software, relational database management system, technology tools and services, technology transfer and any other that may be required for the effective implementation of such.

Source of Funding : Corporate Budget

Contract Duration : Eighteen (18) months

The list of minimum requirements is indicated in the Eligibility Documents. Eligibility of prospective bidders shall be checked using the non-discretionary "PASS/FAIL" criteria from among the pre-qualified bidders, who shall be ranked based on the following criteria: 1) Experience of the Firm; 2) Qualification of Personnel; and 3) Job Capacity of Firm. Only five (5) eligible bidders shall make up the shortlist of bidders that will be issued Bidding Documents.

The evaluation procedure to be adopted shall be Quality-Cost Based Evaluation (QCBE). Bids whose technical proposals pass the minimum technical rating of 70 points shall have its financial proposals opened and evaluated. The technical proposal shall carry 70% weight in the bid evaluation

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-bid Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The schedules of activities are as follows:

Approved Budget for the Contract	P90,000,000.00
Submission of Letter of Intent and Application for Eligibility/Issuance of Eligibility Documents	Starting December 11, 2007 at the Bids & Contracts Services Dept. (BCSD) Office, Ground Floor, NPC-HO, Agham Road corner Quezon Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
Deadline of Submission of Eligibility Requirements/ Eligibility Check	January 3, 2008, 9:00 AM at Moriones Function Room, NPC Solarium
Issuance of Bidding Documents	January 15, 2008, 9:00 AM at BCSD Office, NPC Solarium
Pre-Bid Conference	January 23, 2008, 9:00 AM at Moriones Function Room, NPC Solarium
Submission and Opening of Bids	February 6, 2008, 9:00 AM at Moriones Function Room, NPC Solarium

The Eligibility Documents will be available at the BCSD upon submission of Letter of Intent, and upon payment of non-refundable amount of P1,500.00 either in cash or manager's check to NPC Cashier. Bidding Documents will be available only to shortlisted bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P10,000.00 either in cash or manager's check. Pursuant to GPPB Res. No: 22-2006, prospective bidders should register with PhilGEPS and secure the corresponding Certificate of Registration.

NPC reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from BCSD at telephone no. (02) 922-1622 or visit NPC (www.napocor.gov.ph) and DBM (www.procurementservice.gov.ph) websites.

(Sgd.) JUAN CARLOS J. GUADARRAMA
Vice President and Chairman,
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - Dec. 11, 2007)

Caridad Tan Manga

17 December 1928 - 09 December 2007

Peacefully joined her Creator at the age of 78.

Her husband **Narciso G. Manga** (†); children **Becky** and **Jun Santiago**, **Teri** and **Rene Cruz**, **Butch** and **Ging Cabahug**, **Jerry** and **Dina Villanueva**; grandchildren **Nikki**, **Kenneth**, **Reann**, **Trina**, **Mitch**, **Miko**, **Peia** and **Dana**, great-grandchildren, parents **Bienvenido** (†) and **Salome** (†) **Tan**, siblings **Consuelo**, **Bienvenido**, **Teresita** (†), **Sr. Christine** (†), **Leticia** and **Angeles** request your prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Mount Carmel Church, New Manila, Quezon City.

Interment will follow after the 8:00 a.m. Holy Mass on Thursday, 13 December, 2007.

In lieu of flowers, please make a donation to Alay Kapwa Educational Foundation, Inc.

"Receive our immortal souls, and when our bodies have risen again, place them likewise in your kingdom that we may love and bless you for ever and ever."

So dearly beloved "Daddy and Lolo Fred"

ALFREDO RELLAMAS FONTILLAS

of Amungan, Iba, Zambales
November 7, 1930 – December 7, 2007

*Former Country Finance Officer of **American Express Co.** and Former Professor of **Silliman University** and **Philippine School of Business Administration***

who peacefully passed away in the infinite grace and goodness of our Lord and in the company of Mary, the Queen of Heaven and St. Josemaria Escriva.

Beloved son of **Simplicio Fontillas** (✝) and **Susana Rellamas** (✝). His loving wife **Dr. Corazon Divino** (✝); children and children-in-law, **Dr. Maria Teresa F. Luis** and **Naz Luis**; **Dr. Raymund Alfredo D. Fontillas** and **Dr. Ayey Vida**; **Raymund Antonio D. Fontillas**; **Raymund Pancratius D. Fontillas** and **Eileen Cabarrus**; **Dr. Raymund Angelo D. Fontillas** and **Jane Sumbillo**; grandchildren **Josef**, **Anna**, **Javi**, **Tina**, **Corinne**, **Clarisse**, **Manu** and **Eric**; and other relatives and friends request your prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at Loyola Memorial Chapels in Guadalupe, Makati City. Interment will be on Friday, December 14, 2007 at Loyola Memorial Park in Marikina City after the 8:00 am Mass.

I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.
John 14:6

FORTUNATA AGUIRRE BARTOLOME

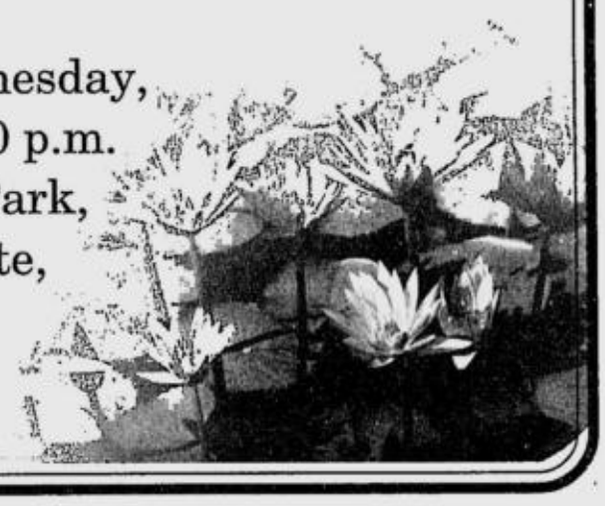
October 14, 1928 – December 6, 2007

Peacefully joined her Creator at the age of 74.

Her bereaved children: **Efren** & **Baby**, **Ping** & **Amy**, **Zenaida** & **Chuck**, **Dante** & **Anabel**, **Ricardo** & **Carol**, **Romeo** & **Aymie** and **Susan** & **Danny**; grandchildren and great-grandchildren, relatives & friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in her residence at 081 Dulong Bayan, City of San Jose Del Monte, Bulacan.

Interment will be on Wednesday, December 12, 2007 at 1:00 p.m. at Holy Haven Memorial Park, City of San Jose Del Monte, Bulacan.



ALICIA YLAGAN NAVARRO

of Quezon City and Naujan, Oriental Mindoro

*Peacefully joined our Creator and her husband **Borry** on December 6, 2007 at the age of 83.*

Her bereaved children **Teddy** and **Bebots**, **Butch** and **Thelma**, **Bobby**, **Hector** and **Rowena**, **Joy**, **Gina** and **Mia**; grandchildren **Nadinne**, **Paolo**, **Therese**, **Katrina**, **Mikael**, **Mariz**, **Kim**, **Kay**, **Renzo**, **Anna**, **Tricia**, **Ali** and **Gabriel**; sisters **Velia Y. Javier** and **Betty Y. Sison**; sisters-and brother-in-law, **Lily N. Santos**, **Arleta N. Ruffy** and **Mario C. Navarro**, nephews and nieces, request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Mt. Carmel, Broadway, New Manila, Quezon City.

Interment at Loyola, Marikina will be tomorrow, December 12, 2007 after the 8:00 a.m. Mass.

In Loving Memory of the
First Death Anniversary
of

LEA A. SOLIMAN

who died on December 11, 2006 at Lucena City

Masses shall be offered today at the following churches:

National Shrine of our Lady of Lourdes, Quezon City	7:30 a.m.
Our Lady of Hope Parish Quezon City	6:30 a.m.
Our Lady of the Gate Parish Daraga, Albay	5:30 p.m.
Carmel of St. Joseph Lucena City	6:30 a.m.

The family requests your prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

CLASSIFIEDS

TENDER
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TENDER SALE
Manufacturing Plant Services
Deadline of Submission of Bids: Friday 14th December 2007-17:00
Location of Assets: Bo. Ugong, Pasig City
BUHLER Ship Unloader; (3) WESCO Aluminum Wheat Trailers; Unused/Used Bearings; Heavy Duty Wooden Pallets; Pallet Jack; etc.
VIEWING: STRICTLY BY APPOINTMENT
For more details please visit our website at www.goindustry.com
GoIndustry
Contact: JENNY, JESSA, DANG
Tel: +63 (2) 822 5555
manila@goindustry.com

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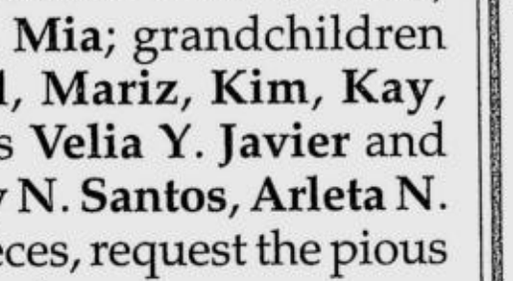
National Power Corporation	– B6
Phil. Reclamation Authority	– B6
DOLE-NCR	– B6
Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority	– B6
PEZA-Baguio	– B6
Algon Place	– B8



BIG CLEAN-UP DAY

Nov. 28, 2007 LTO Region III. In line with the Total Quality Management Program of the Land Transportation Office and the Clean and Green program of the government, the Land Transportation Office, Regional Office No. 3 headed by Director Moises P. Almuete conducted the BIG-CLEAN UP DAY. Personnel from the Regional Office and the adjacent LTO San Fernando District Office swept and clean the surroundings of the office, planted plants along its perimeter fence and improved the facade of the office. This is also in line with the implementation of the 5S program in LTO Offices to increase efficiency and productivity of its employees. The LTO is not only cleaning the streets of traffic violators, it also promotes a healthy environment for its employees and clients.

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BUSINESS

BSP: Net FDIs in first 9 months reached $1.9B

THE PHILIPPINES CAPTURED $1.9 billion in net foreign direct investments in the first nine months, or 22.3 percent higher year-on-year.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. yesterday reported that, for the month of September alone, net FDI level amounted to $44 million as new foreign investors poured in fresh capital, while existing ones plowed back earnings to local businesses. However, the monthly level was 77.3 percent lower than the net take in the same period last year.

Unlike portfolio investments, which are more volatile, FDIs represent investments in bricks-and-mortar businesses that are usually capital and labor-intensive, such as factories, power plants, mining ventures, business process outsourcing and other enterprises. They are considered the least volatile form of financial flows.

"Behind the sustained net FDI inflows in September 2007 were net equity capital placements of $95 million that were mostly infused into the real estate and manufacturing sectors," Tetangco said.

The net inflow in the reinvested earnings account, amounting to $20 million, also contributed to this development. The combined inflows more than offset the net outflow of $71 million in other capital investments, he explained.

From January to September, the net FDI flows exceeded the $1.6 billion recorded in the same period a year ago.

On a cumulative basis, net FDI inflows from January to September 2007 consisted largely of net equity capital placements by foreign investors which came to around $1.8 billion.

Gross equity capital placements reached $2 billion and were absorbed by manufacturers of electronics, health and chemical products; providers of international courier and information technology development and multimedia service; as well as construction, mining and agricultural industries. *Doris C.Dumlao*

RP ranks 15th in per capita scale

ADB tracks inequality in Asia-Pacific living standards

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINES RANKED 15TH out of 23 developing countries across Asia-Pacific in terms of real per capita income, or average earnings per person, based on a new Asian Development Bank study that tracked disparities in the region's living standards.

According to the bank's "2005 International Comparison Program (ICP) in Asia and the Pacific: Purchasing Power Parity and Real Expenditure" released yesterday, Brunei, Singapore, Macao, Hong Kong and Taiwan are the top five economies in developing Asia and the Pacific in terms of real per capita income.

Japan and South Korea were not included in the study.

"The study shows the growth and developmental challenges facing the region," ADB economist Ifzal Ali said. "The region has miles to go before celebrating its economic success."

The Philippines lagged behind Malaysia (6th), Thailand (8th), China (10th) and Sri Lanka (13th) in terms of its citizens' individual economic prowess. But the country was ahead of Pakistan (17th), Vietnam (18th) and India (19th) in the same indicator.

Per capita real gross domestic product in the Philippines was estimated at HK$16,675—nearly thrice the per capita GDP of Asia-Pacific's poorest economy on the list Nepal (HK$6,146), but a measly 6 percent of the income of the richest economy Brunei (HK$269,971). It stood below the regional average of HK$20,432 (a Hong Kong dollar is about five times the peso).

Average per capita earnings in Singapore and Hong Kong, among the top Asian destinations of overseas Filipino workers, respectively stood at 14 times and 12 times the Philippines' per capita income.

Developing Asia's fastest growing economies, China and India—which together make up 64 percent of the total real GDP of the 23 economies—posted a respective per capita real GDP of HK$23,267 and HK$12,090.

The study, which provides a snapshot of economic measures, like income, consumption expenditure and capital formation, is part of a global initiative that allows cross-country comparison purchasing powers of currencies and living standards. The ICP, which was coordinated globally by the World Bank, will allow comparison of major economic indicators for 146 countries.

The ADB was the regional coordinator for the ICP Asia-Pacific, which accounts for half the world's population.

The study took into account each economy's purchasing power parity (PPP), an idea popularized by The Economist's Big Mac Index, which prices hamburgers in global cities for a quick and crude comparison of inter-country price levels. The ICP is an attempt at a cross-country comparison of key economic indicators based on this index and provides the most comprehensive cover of a broader range of commodities.

Based on the Price Level Index, which is the ratio of the PPP to the exchange rate, Fiji Islands and Hong Kong, China, are the costliest places to live, with respective price level indices of 208 and 180. They are followed by Macao (162); Singapore (159); Taiwan (148); and Maldives (156).

The price level index for the Philippines was estimated at 97, at par with the cost of living in Thailand but cheaper than in Malaysia (112), China (103) and Indonesia (100).

In all, the study highlights the huge inequality in living standards among Asia-Pacific economies.

Spain to help develop Bicol, Caraga

By Amy R. Remo

THE SPANISH GOVernment has pledged one million euros in financial aid to the Philippines to help strengthen the agro-industrial sectors in Bicol and the Caraga region.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap said the memorandum of understanding "gives flesh to Madrid's commitment to the socioeconomic conditions of the small rural producers of the Philippines."

The MOU was signed last week by Yap and Juan Pablo de Laiglesia, the secretary general of the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation.

The project will focus on value-adding of major commodities such as coconut, abaca, cassava and pineapple and strengthening of the capabilities of both project beneficiaries and implementers.

Establishment of processing facilities and installation of the required machinery and equipment will be undertaken under the first component of the project, the DA added.

Meanwhile, Yap said the DA, through the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, will also ink a separate MOU with the Agencia Española de Cooperacion Internationale for a project on sustainable management of coastal resources, also in the two regions.

Similarly, the second project is covered by an official development assistance from Spain under the 5th Joint Commission for Cooperation for 2006-2008.

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RP seen surpassing sales target of 110,000 vehicles

By Ronnel W. Domingo

DOMESTIC VEHICLE SALES ARE expected to break the 110,000 mark this year, the highest since the Asian financial crisis a decade ago, as the strong peso, stable market, strong economy, and a large line-up of new models drive record sales.

Elizabeth H. Lee, president of the Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers Association of the Philippines (Campi), said in a joint report with the Truck Manufacturers Association that the groups sold 105,774 units from January to November or 18.3 percent higher than the year-ago period.

"Only 2,226 units need to be sold before we hit the target of 108,000 units this year but monthly sales have averaged 9,615 units in the past 11 months," Lee said.

Also, she cited the final resolution of the Supreme Court upholding the ban on used vehicles as well as the government's "continued implementation" of this ban as contributing to the industry's growth.

Data from Campi and TMA show that overall sales of commercial vehicles grew 25.2 percent in the 11-month period while that of passenger cars grew 7.5 percent.

The CV segment, which includes the subcategories of Asian utility vehicles, light commercial vehicles, light trucks, and trucks and buses, accounted for 65 percent of aggregate sales.

All four subcategories showed improvements with sales of AUVs going up 27.8 percent to 28,419 units and of light commercial vehicles—consisting of pickups, vans, compact sports utility vehicles—by 23.4 percent to 37,286 units.

The assemblers also sold 1,885 units of light trucks or 21.6 percent higher while buyers took 811 units of trucks and buses or 24.8 percent better.

As for passenger cars, turnover increased to 37,373 units, although November sales slid by 10.6 percent compared to the October figure.

In terms of total sales, Toyota Motor Philippines Corp. kept the lead with 37.7 percent of the market. It sold 39,843 units, increasing by 16.8 percent from the same period last year.

Honda Cars Philippines Inc. remained at second with 15.3 percent of the market as sales reached 16,139 units, up 28.4 percent.

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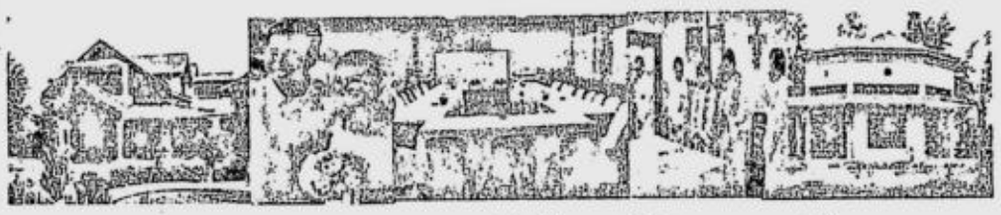

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**Ayala Land, Inc. recently participated in the Asian International Real Estate Expo & Conference held in PICC from Dec 6-10.
Shown in photo: Ayala Land Senior Vice-President, Head of Corporate Sales & Marketing Group and Chairman of Ayala Land International Sales, Inc., Rex A. Mendoza together with Jay Visco, Division Manager of Corporate Sales, and Property Specialists from Ayala Land International Sales.**

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INSIDE OUT
Cory Quirino

Take charge of your health

Be clear about your goals and whatever they are, work to achieve them

PART-I

A NEW ERA IS UPON US. IT puts you on center stage in caring for your own health.

There was a time when people would not take an active role in a plan to keep themselves healthy, leaving all the major decisions to their physicians.

The day of taking charge has arrived. And you are in control.

Change is good

Because a new season of change is upon you, there are changes to be made. Taking charge means the following:

1. Be clear about your health goals.

Do you want to have a stronger body, prolong and sustain your energy levels, boost your resilience against stress, or just simply refuse to catch a cold every three months? Whatever your goal is, assess, decide and act.

2. Seek advice/guidance from experts—your physician/nutritionist/gym trainer. Sometimes even your pastor/parish priest or best friend may have a recommendation or two.

3. No matter what the occasion, you should not be deterred or derailed from your goal.

4. Give yourself a workable timetable, something that is not an impossible dream, one that will not stress you out.

5. Listen to your body language. If your body talks to you in ways you cannot ignore, listen. Pretending that your symptoms will go away by ignoring them will not eliminate them. In fact, the next time around they will become more serious.

Human performance

In a casual, random survey, people were asked what they really wanted from their bodies. The answer was unanimous from the men—to be in tip-top performance level. Women, on the other hand, said they wished for strength and beauty.

Philip Maffetone, in "In Fitness and in Health," said when health and fitness were balanced, the result was optimal human performance.

You do not have to win an Olympic gold medal to be fit and healthy. You just need to perform well in all aspects of life—personal, family, work and social.

So let us define the terms clearly:

Fitness—to perform a physical activity well

Health—the optimal balance of all the body systems, muscular, skeletal, nervous, digestive, lymphatic, hormonal, mental, emotional, and other systems

Dr. Maffetone does simple math: fitness + health = human performance.

Limitless energy

Your body requires energy to fulfill its physical needs. So we have to feed it energy. Nourish your body with the basic food requirements: carbohydrates (bread, pasta, fruits, rice), fats (oil, butter, cheese eggs), proteins (meat, fish, poultry).

If balance is the key, then eating moderate amounts from the different food groups mentioned should give you what you need.

Good nutrition also means good hydration—10-12 glasses of water daily, and vegetables. With these, you can only do the right thing.

Finally, balance includes enough time for work and play. When work takes the bulk of your time, sooner or later your health will suffer—both mentally and physically.

People who are naturally driven will not give importance to this. They are so focused on their work/money ambition to the detriment of their health.

But it is never too late to make adjustments. More on this next week.

Meanwhile, your affirmation today is: "Today I take charge of me."

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MAURICE Arcache (as in *moi*), Vicky Morales Reyno, Korina Sanchez, Ruth Co, Missy Ayala, Tim Yap, Gina Lopez, Boy Abunda, Ms. Raiva and Quezon City Vice Mayor Herbert Bautista

Star-studded 'Broadway production'

HOTEL Intercon GM Christian Pirodon

FIRST Daughter Luli M. Arroyo

GMA hotshot Rod Cornejo

THE MADISON GRILL, Quezon City's spanking new dining destination, had a star-studded opening, *palanggas*.

It will no doubt attract Quezon City-based residents and executives and even Makati and *Manille* gourmands who will surely appreciate the luxury of savoring melt-in-your-mouth Wagyu, Kobe, and certified US Angus beef, as well as have fun making their own pizzas, among other yummies, dahlings.

Instead of the usual ribbon-snipping, there was a fun pizza-cutting. The star lineup of pizza cutters were **Boy Abunda**; **Korina Sanchez**; **Vicky Morales**; **Maurice Arcache**, as in *moi*; QC Vice Mayor **Herbert Bautista**; ABS-CBN Foundation's **Gina Lopez**; **Missy Ayala** (wife of Ayala's Jimmy Ayala), food mogul **Prevesyudhi Raiva** of Thailand; and *naturellement*, the brilliant hotshot producer of the Broadway-theme extravaganza, Ms with 4 Bs **Ruth Velasco-Co**.

Each of us later customized our pizza slices.

Rajo Laurel came a bit late-ish to cut his white truffle-laced pizza. But he was early enough to savor prime cuts of Wagyu, Roast Australian Lamb Leg and salt-crusted Chilean sea bass, *palanggas*.

Tim Yap, recently awarded "Star Host" of the year, was the emcee of the affair.

Madison Grill was packed elbow to elbow with television and movie celebrities, and other people who are stars in their own right.

Dashing in just in time for the slicing of our individual pizza pieces, to be filled with toppings of our choice, was the brilliant and articulate **Boy Abunda**.

All excited was mother-to-be, GMA's beautiful **Vicky Morales Reyno**, who makes wishes come true. "Can you believe, Maurice, after six years my wish finally came true?" she told me. She looked great in her preggy state.

Naturellement proud papa-to-be, dashing **King Reyno**, was beaming with pride.

My pal **Pepper Teehankee** could not get enough of the Wagyu rib-eye and had three servings. Statuesque **Zandra Ty**, MetroBank's first lady, couldn't wait to check out the fantastic menu this one-of-a-kind resto had to offer, dahlings.

And **Margarita Yuchengco Locsin**, who just jetted in from Russia, was all excited about her wedding on Jan. 2 to her true love, **Antonio Chan**.

And would you believe that my choice of topping was the No. 1 favorite? People piled it on their pizza as fast as you could bat an eyelash.

Saying this was his wife's act, business magnate **Arnold Co** applauded Ruth's production while contemplating the next food venture their company would explore.

Madison Grill was fantastically designed and its interiors done through the collaboration between Strategic Brands Networks and **Ivy Almario** of the famed Atelier Almario architectural firm who had this to say: "The interiors deliver a warm and fun ambiance beyond 'rare'—a truly 'well-done' project!" Need I say more?

Yes, *palanggas*, check out this resto at the third floor of TriNoma, right across Zara. It will be your journey to a perfect steak. For reservations, call 9341572. You won't regret it, I promise.

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alex Van Hagen using **Kodak** EasyShare system

Brave fish

The past few weeks have been dismal, with the weather so wet and gloomy, but not for the popular Team Bigfish that blasted out an explosive bash that gave party people a euphoric experience on the dance floor, dahlings.

Embassy Superclub and Bigfish matched the raging rain with an equally raging party powered by no less than Fierce Angels resident DJ **Eric Kupper**. From the beat inside, you'd never guess it was pouring outside.

Nobody can fashionably and fearlessly charge forward in the blinding rain better than the Bigfish party people, *palanggas*. The success of this happening is another proof that the love for partying wins over any natural obstacle. It's been proven time and again that when Bigfish calls, dahlings, the night owls will come.

Smart Gold, Coors Beer, Myx, Inquirer.net, Philippine Star, Good Times Condoms, Mega Publishing, Circuit, MNL, NU 107, plus so many other hot sponsors contributed to the hot event's success.

BIGFISH's Pixie Cheah and cyber-smart Ricky Daker

ANGELA de Vera and Anna Disini

MOTOROLA'S Mari Litonjua and wife Ibay

Now, *palanggas*, don't let the seemingly blasphemous name fool you. Anyone who knows his dance music knows what Godskitchen is. And it's definitely got nothing to do with gods or kitchens.

Godskitchen is just one of the oldest, most prolific, most influential and biggest superclubs in the international clubbing community, right up there with namedroppable clubbing heavyweights.

Godskitchen stormed into *Manille* with British trance superstar DJ **John Askew** and Bigfish resident DJ **Johnboy Lee**, no less. I Esplanade was completely decked out, transformed into a total party heaven, dahlings. VIP areas along the walls were occupied by the cream of the party-going crowd.

And tons of *Manille*'s most beautiful and most fashionable people showed up all dressed in the latest chic style. The whole place was alive with pumping music, pulsating laser lights, tantalizing motion graphics and awesome bodies dancing in unison, way, way past Cinderella's bedtime, *palanggas*. Well, that's what partying is all about, *n'est-ce pas* (as in, *di bala*)?

ARTIE Lopez and Binx

DJ Eric Kupper

OUR HOST, brilliant mega entrepreneurs Ruth Velasco and husband Arnold Co

STOCK market's Vivian Yuchengco and daughter Margarita Y. Locsin

BEAUTIFUL couple: King Reyno and preggy wife Vicky Morales

METROBANK'S Zandra Ty and Cherry Pie Tan-Ty

FRENCH Baker's Johnlu Koa

ESCADA'S Marilou Koa and Florence Co

CARMINA Pavia, Rox Silverio, Jaqui Dayrit Boncan, Chiqui Hahn; (seated) Sanchez and Red Cross' beautiful Rosa Rosal

JILL Beckingham, wife of the British ambassador, and southern lady Jeanie Javelosa

PAUL Smith's Miguel Ongsiako, Tim Yap, and architect and interior designer Chito Antonio

KIM Camacho and daughter Bea

AYALALAND'S Myrna Fernandez, Rowena Tomeldan and Cora Dizon

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INNER AWARENESS
Jaime Licauco

Power of suggestion

Part II

IN MY SEMINARS, I HAVE SUMMARIZED the Law of Attraction in the following simple steps:

1. Be sure you know what it is you really want. What is your goal specifically?

2. You must slow down your brain waves to at least the alpha level (from 7 to 14 cycles per second on the EEG or electro-encephalogram). But you do not need an EEG machine to know that. All you have to do is go into a relaxed, passive meditative state.

3. Once you have reached the alpha state, visualize or form an image of your goal using all your five senses. To make things happen, you must engage also the right hemisphere of your brain that only understands pictures, images and symbols.

Your left brain is your analytical, logical and critical side. The right brain is your intuitive and imaginative brain.

4. You must mentally program or visualize your goal at least twice a day, once in the morning after waking up, and once before going to sleep.

You must visualize your goal as already achieved and not how you are going to achieve it.

5. To make your brain programming successful, there are three important factors you must keep in mind. You must have a strong desire for your goal, you must believe in the method or programming you are doing and you must expect the result to happen without any doubt at all.

If doubt enters your mind, you will not achieve your goal because you are putting a monkey wrench to its achievement.

The Law of Affirmation

Closely related to the Law of Attraction is the Law of Affirmation or Suggestion. This law states that whatever we affirm or suggest becomes a physical reality.

Rhonda Byrne, in her book "The Secret," discusses affirmation or suggestion or intention as part of the Law of Attraction but it is really a separate law in itself.

The Law of Attraction states that "like attracts like." We do not have to affirm it verbally for it to work. We attract what we are, whether we say it or not. It is like the theory of vibrations, similar energies or vibrations attract themselves to one another.

In a social setting we say, "Birds of the same feather flock together." I recall here the true and documented case of an American woman who married and divorced five different men, all of whom turned out to be drunkards. She could not understand why she attracted this type of men.

Positive affirmation or suggestion, however, is one of the keys to the achievement of any goal we have. Realize that thoughts are things, thoughts have energy, thoughts have power.

In the 18th century, a French pharmacist turned healer, Emile Coué, became famous because of his discovery of the power of positive suggestion or affirmation.

Parisian medical doctors considered Coué a quack. But when terribly ill patients started getting healed after visiting his clinic, they sent spies to find out how he cured the patients.

The spies reported that, whatever illness the patient had, Coué asked him to repeat to himself the following statement 16 times a day: "Every day in every way, I am getting better and better." And they indeed got better.

That was long before Anton Mesmer discovered what became known as "mesmerism" and "later hypnosis." And, long before psychology was established as a science, Coué already knew the tremendous power of suggestion in helping people heal themselves.

Coué told the story of an asthmatic who went to another town and stayed in a hotel he had never been to before. That evening, he felt the start of an asthma attack. Usually, when that happened, all he had to do was open a window and breathe fresh air.

But he was in a strange place. It was dark and he did not remember where the light switch was. In desperation, he began walking in the dark touching all the walls in search of a window.

When he touched a glassy area, which he assumed was the window, he hurled a chair and broke it. He breathed deeply and his asthma subsided, enough for him to go back to sleep.

The next morning he looked at what he broke. It was an old grandfather clock. His hotel room did not have a window. The thought of breathing fresh air stopped what could have been a fatal asthma attack.

Such is the power of suggestion or affirmation!

Friends of hearing impaired honored

MEDICAL ELECTRONICS (MED-EL) ASIA Pacific Region celebrated its 10th anniversary by honoring institutions and individuals that have helped the hearing impaired lead normal, productive lives.

The event was also a reunion of about a hundred cochlear implant users nationwide.

Recipients of the Outstanding Public Service Award included the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO), ABS-CBN and anchor person Korina Sanchez, and pioneering Filipino cochlear implant surgeons Drs. Norberto Martinez and Charlotte Chiong.

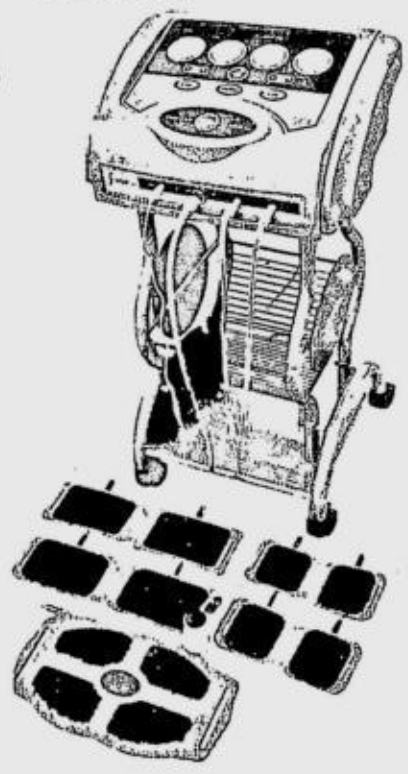
Dr. Eliza Baroque, manager of the Charity Clinic Department, accepted the award on behalf of PCSO chair Sergio Valencia. PCSO has donated partial funding for surgeries of indigent deaf pupils.

ABS-CBN was honored for its programs that raised public awareness on the potentials of the hearing impaired.

Med-El Asia Pacific country manager Maribel Mueller presented the awards. She was assisted by Dr. Erwin Hockmair, chair of the department of applied physics at Innsbruck University, Austria; and Austrian Ambassador Herbert Jaeger. Dr. Hochmair invented the Med-el cochlear implant.

As part of the anniversary observance, Med-El donated a cochlear implant device to Hannah Dorothy Pagarigan, 6, daughter of Raymund M. Pagarigan, a tricycle driver. She has been a scholar of Med-el since 2004 at St. Francis School VSA Arts Philippines.

How to lose the extra holiday pounds



WORRIED ABOUT THE POUNDS YOU WILL gain during the holidays? Vigen BodyCare may be able to help.

The Humony Super Slimming Physique machine is a revolutionary slimming machine that works by activating one's natural body frequency. With just 40-60 minutes of treatment each day, Humony SSP can make the body stronger and even more charged than before.

The Humony SSP combines two beneficial forces, faradic wavelength and cellotherm.

Faradic wavelength is a slimming treatment that originated in France. It uses biodynamic frequency to reach deep into the body, ridding it of fat, cholesterol and other bodily wastes while promoting muscle tone and reducing fat cells.

Cellotherm is a German technology that also burns fat and cholesterol using far infrared rays. At the same time, it enhances the body's metabolism while strengthening body cells.

An hour-long session with Humony SSP costs P500.

Other health-enhancing machines at Vigen BodyCare include the Moxi Seat Bath, a heat-regulated seat using far infrared rays, and the thermal Top and Top Bed for the back and neck area.

Vigen Body Care is at 2/F 220-B Wilson St., San Juan, Metro Manila; e-mail VigenBodyCare@gmail.com, tel. 7444693.

Weight loss solutions that last

By Mitch Felipe

Part 2

CHANGE YOUR LIFESTYLE.

When your workout is not enough or impossible to sustain, you need a lifestyle change.

My present job entails more writing and sitting down to talk to clients, unlike before. I used to train clients for exercise and teach group exercise classes at least five days a week. During that time, I can eat more than what I eat now and still lose weight.

I started using a pedometer (this can be bought from electronic centers) early this year and discovered during my personal lifestyle assessment that I move less now than before.

I decided to make a conscious effort to complete at least 40,000 steps per week with at least 3-4 hours of cardio workout and twice a week of weight training so I can manage the same amount and quality of food and still maintain my weight.

A recent study published in the Journal of Medical Association shows that just over 2,100 additional steps per day mean a 27 per cent increase in physical activity.

I remember my first client who lost 25 pounds in six months by working out 5-6 times a week. She did indoor cycling, treadmill and twice a week of full body weight training. She also did her best to modify her food intake.

When she went to Italy to study, she stopped her usual gym workout due to lack of access. But, she had to walk almost two hours to and from her school. After six months, she lost 20 more pounds.

A realistic lifestyle change is something that you can imagine doing long-term without getting stressed or feeling deprived. That type of lifestyle is quite simple, but you can see gradual results that will last.

Solve your issues first

Identify your problems then try to solve them first before expecting long-term results.

There is a lot to consider in terms of managing weight, not just exercise and diet, but also how you live, manage your time and solve personal issues.

You sleep for 6-8 hours, and work for another eight hours. You devote the rest of the day to self-care, eating, workout or sports and any form of recreational activity like watching television, reading or chatting with friends.

You cannot always expect a perfect day and, most of the time, you will face unexpected challenges. Sometimes, unresolved issues will continue to haunt your thoughts and affect your emotions.

Let us say you are quite successful in losing weight right now. You plan to eat healthy for the day and spend 90 minutes at the gym. Suddenly, on your way to the gym, you see your ex-boyfriend with his new girlfriend. You end up buying a box of pizza on your way home. You can tell what comes next ...

This is why a person often fails to maintain a desired rate of weight loss. Issues from the past remain up to the present and letting go of and recovering from a painful emotion is hard.

In the weight loss readiness test presented at the Learn Program for Weight Control by Kelly Brownell, existing outside factors like negative emotions, stress at work and family obligations are being considered in assessing how much effort is needed to stick to a weight loss program.

If you still have lots of issues, be aware of your existing problems and make time to work them out before you can experience a sustainable weight loss.

Sometimes you might not be able to resolve them by yourself. Studies have shown that social support works well. It keeps you motivated to stick to your program and, at the same time, lets you express negative emotions.

Credit success to yourself

Consider yourself the best part of the whole process.

It is true that going through the process of weight loss and sustaining the results require a deeper understanding of exercise physiology, nutrition and psychology.

But the most important ingredient is you. You should be at the center of the process, and should not attribute success to an exercise program, an eating plan, or a piece of weight loss advice from a friend. These are just means of support to enable you to last the journey.

One of the missing links in any weight management program is the person's winning attitude.

You may try all the diets available then realize in the end that believing in yourself is the best weight loss strategy.

Try to read stories of others who successfully survived the challenges. They will inspire you to keep going and make you think that if they were able to do it, why can't you?

For comments or questions e-mail the author at mitchfelipe@gmail.com

Your Doctor Knows Best

Elizabeth Paz-Pacheco, MD, FPCP, FPSEM

Question:

During one of my regular medical consultations, my doctor advised me to start reducing weight because I am getting close to being obese and this increases my risk of having heart disease. What is obesity and why would this put me at risk?

Doctor Says...

Our body is made up of water, fat, protein, carbohydrate and various vitamins and minerals. Obesity is a condition where the stored fat in the body is increased to a point where it is associated with certain health concerns. It is usually evaluated by measuring the BMI or body mass index. BMI is calculated by dividing a person's weight (in kilograms) by the square of his/her height (in meters), thus $BMI = kg/m^2$. A BMI value of 18.5 is *underweight*; 18.5–24.9 is *normal weight*; 25.0–29.9 is *overweight*; 30.0–39.9 is *obese;* 40.0 or higher is *severely (or morbidly) obese*. Asia-Pacific guidelines recommend a stricter criteria, with BMI of 23 considered as overweight and BMI of 25 as obese. Your doctor can guide you on these numbers.

Obesity was previously thought of as an isolated condition. Currently, it has been identified as related to other diseases. Clinical studies have shown that excessive body weight can increase one's chances of developing various diseases, such as cardiovascular or heart diseases, increased blood pressure or hypertension, Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus (DM), snoring resulting to insufficient breathing and osteoarthritis. In addition, fat deposits concentrated on the abdominal area or *Central obesity* is an important risk factor for *metabolic syndrome* – a cluster of diseases and risk factors including Type 2 DM, high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol and triglyceride levels, that heavily predisposes a person to cardiovascular disease.

The number of obese people has doubled and has been continually rising in the last two decades in developed and developing countries. In the Philippines, similar to the other parts of the world, it is believed that 1 in every 8 Filipinos is overweight or obese. The sudden rise in obesity is due to various factors with a trend towards decreasing physical activity and increasing calorie consumption. As with many medical conditions, the energy input and expenditure imbalance that results in obesity often develops from a combination of genetic and environmental factors. Dietary factors, in itself, is insufficient to explain the phenomenal rise of obesity. A seemingly increasing sedentary lifestyle, genetics, certain diseases and medications also have significant roles to play.

So how do we address this? Most health programs and policies are geared toward proper nutritional intake coupled with increase physical activities. The overall management will depend on the degree of obesity. Aside from lifestyle modifications, certain medications and surgical procedures are opted for more extreme cases. Early on, policies are trying to address childhood obesity since this will have a carry over effect once adulthood is reached. This condition should never be overlooked, behind those cute chubby cheeks and bulging tummies lie a medical disaster waiting to happen. For proper guidance, please consult your doctor.

Dr. Paz-Pacheco is an Endocrinologist at The Medical City. She is currently Secretary of the Philippine Association for the Study of Overweight and Obesity; Associate Professor and Chief of Section of Endocrinology at the UP-PGH.

This column is supported by AstraZeneca Philippines as part of its disease awareness campaign. This is not intended to replace the advice of a healthcare professional. Always consult your doctor.

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'Hilot' gets international recognition

MANDALA SPA & VILLAS BORacay's Hilot Trilogy was named the 2007 AsiaSpa Awards Holistic Treatment of the Year.

Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace Durano, congratulating Mandala for the award, said it was an indication that the country's health and wellness destinations and services were definitely at par with world standards.

Established in 2005, the AsiaSpa Awards aim to set the standards in the industry and highlight innovation and quality.

The awards are organized by AsiaSpa Magazine, a luxury wellness publication reaching more than 120,000 women across Asia.

This year's categories included treatments, locations, products, teaching programs, events and individual efforts.

Mandala is one of the first luxury wellness centers in the country to offer *hilot*. It won the 2005 AsiaSpa award for Treatment of the Year.

The two-hour Hilot Trilogy session combines three traditional healing therapies widely practiced in the Philippines. The deep-tissue *hilot* relaxes over-all tension and establishes equilibrium.

The *dagdagay*, of Cordilleran origin, uses two bamboo or rattan sticks to stimulate the soles and cleanse the body from specific points in the feet.

The *bentosa* involves warmed glass cups that suction out toxins and improve circulation.

Hilot is currently being promoted aggressively by the DOT in the international market. Selling missions that feature the wellness therapy have been received enthusiastically by Japanese, Chinese and European travel groups.

MANDALA Spa & Villas Boracay president Karen Neff received the trophy and certificate during the AsiaSpa 2007 Awards ceremony at the Grand Hyatt hotel in Hong Kong.

Eye surgery clinic opens in mall

DO YOU WAKE UP AND FIND yourself knocking over things as you look for your glasses or your contact lenses? You may want to try Lasik surgery so you do not have to suffer blurred vision if you cannot find your sight aids. Lasik is a 30-minute correctable, effective outpatient procedure to remedy a range of visual problems and improve eyesight.

Over 11 million Lasik surgeries had been performed worldwide so far. With greater advances in technology and with more and more people wanting to be rid of the inconvenience of wearing glasses or contacts, Lasik surgery is increasingly becoming a common out-patient procedure.

Singapore's largest dedicated Lasik Surgery Clinic averages 1,600 Lasik surgeries a month, making it one of the largest Lasik Surgery Clinics in the world.

Filipinos can now avail of the procedure with the opening of Lasik Surgery Clinic Manila. The first international branch of Lasik Surgery Clinic, it is located at DLS-STI MegaClinic of SM Megamall.

PRE-SURGERY consultation takes at least an hour.

LSC Manila at MegaClinic is owned by Lasik Surgery Inc. It is a partnership venture between De los Santos-STI group with Felix Huang, Dr. Enrique Enriquez and Dr. Gabriel Heredia.

LSC Manila offers refractive surgery using state-of-the-art equipment as well as a referral center for all eye problems including cataract, glaucoma, oculoplasty, retina and pediatric ophthalmology.

Like the Singapore clinic, it uses the most widely used VISX Star S4 with Iris Registration. LSC Manila (www.lasik-surgeryclinic.com.ph, 6352705) also offers advanced cataract surgery (phacoemulsification) using the latest and most sophisticated machines.

Lasik Surger Clinic (Manila) has a team of professional and highly qualified eye surgeons to ensure the highest standard of personal and professional care with Enriquez as head senior eye surgeon of LSC Manila.

Club holds eye care activities in schools

TEENZONE CLUB, A BRAINCHILD of Ciba Vision, global manufacturer of lenses and lens care products, held recently its educational talk series, "Computer Vision Syndrome Awareness Campaign—A Close Encounter on Vision Hazards" in school campuses.

Computer vision syndrome or CVS is considered one of today's fast-rising eye diseases affecting hundreds of students and professionals alike.

The interactive talk series was conducted at the Centro Escolar University, St. Scholastica's College, Delos Santos-STI College of Nursing and University of Santo Tomas.

The talks were conducted by eye care professionals Dr. Jeanette Romualdez-Oo, Ciba Vision's professional services consultant, and Dr. Cirila Salcedo, product manager of IOS marketing.

They provided participants information on the cause and effect of CVS, the importance of eye care, and key advantages of contact lenses.

Optical care activities were also conducted. Participants were given free eye check-up using state-of-the art auto refractor machine.

Students, faculty members and other school staff members availed of free trial lens fitting.

TeenZone Club (8893101/6140086; e-mail teenzone@bettereyesforbetterlife.com, teenzone@stocklandworldwideinc.com, teenzoneclub@yahoo.com and clubteenzone@gmail.com) offers optical care services such as eye consultations and eye examinations to members and their families.

Members enjoy other freebies like invites to concerts, parties and other events, as well as special discounts in participating shops, gyms, etc.

MEDICard The Healthcare I Deserve!

Take Charge Doc!

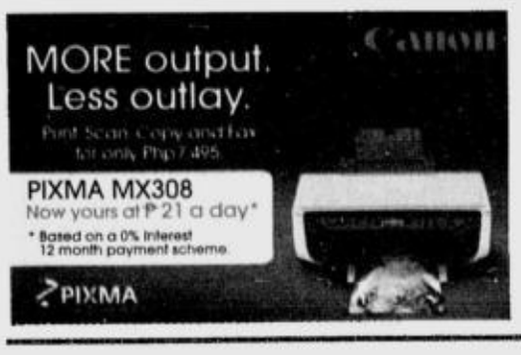
What are the common injuries caused by firecrackers?

Firecrackers related injury most frequently involve the hands/fingers (45%), eyes (30%) and head/face (25%). More than half of injuries occurring are burns. In the hands and fingers, firecracker blast injury can cause traumatic amputation of the fingers resulting in shortened fingers and even loss of the fingers. In the eyes, contusions, lacerations and foreign bodies are frequently seen. Firecrackers can be associated with serious injuries such as blindness, third-degree burns, permanent scarring and loss of limb.

This week's answer to our feature question was provided by our accredited Orthopaedic Surgeon, Dr. Eric John Morales. Dr. Morales, a medicine graduate of the University of Sto. Tomas, had his training for his sub-specialty in Sports Medicine & Arthroscopy at the National University of Hospital of Singapore. He is a fellow the

his quality time with his family watching movies or travelling out of town and since his sub-specialty is Sports Medicine & Arthroscopy, Dr. Morales have tried many sports activities as possible. MEDICard members may avail for his consultations at Asian Hospital & Medical Center every Monday and Friday 9am to 11am, Marikina Valley Medical Center every Monday, Wednesday and Friday 1-3pm, Manila East Medical Center every Tuesday, Thursday & Saturday 1-3pm, World Citi Medical Center every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday 10-12nn and at Garcia General Hospital every Monday, Wednesday and Friday 3-4pm.

MEDICard's Medical Director, Dr. Nicky Montoya answers questions on health through the assistance and expertise of MEDICard's network of accredited specialists. Write to Dr. Nicky or E-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com for your inquiries on health matters.



ENTERTAINMENT

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Sam, Anne insist there's no romance

By Marinel R. Cruz

"I DON'T KNOW HOW TO court girls. Anne and I are very good friends. Friendship is the foundation of a good relationship. We'll just see where this goes," Fil-Am actor Sam Milby said, when asked if he was really wooing Australian-born actress Anne Curtis.

Stories romantically linking them persist, especially when an alleged lover's spat—during the 1st Star Magic Ball in August—was uploaded on YouTube.

On "The Buzz," where she

SAM/ D4

Gifts that stars would rather not get

'TIS THE SEASON OF GIFT-GIVING. DO WE feel obliged to give friends a Christmas present just because they gave us one? How much of us is in every gift we wrap?

Here are some stars' thoughts about what they don't want to get this Christmas and the gift they'd like to give another celeb.

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

Gift of discernment

Lea Salonga: "I'd like to give every single celebrity in local show biz the gift of discernment on when it's OK to do something publicly, and when it's time to draw the curtains and keep things close to the chest. It's never a bad thing to learn when and where to draw the line. As for the gift I don't want to receive? I can't say there's anything I wouldn't want to get, since everything that comes my way is a blessing."

No pirated discs

Ogie Alcasid: "I would hate to receive a pirated CD or DVD for Christmas because I am fighting against it. I would like to give all feuding celebs a big warm hug so that they would give peace a chance this Christmas."

BF for Katrina

Cristine Reyes: "I don't like to get a mug as a Christmas gift. That's too corny and common. If I could give Katrina Halili a BF for Christmas, I would. She hasn't had one in a long time and *para di malamig ang Pasko niya.*"

Poinsettias for Lolit

Alfred Vargas: "Please, no more copies of 'The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People.' Five people already gave me that book. I want to give *Nanay* Lolit Solis poinsettias to fill her garden this holiday season because she loves its redness and beauty."

Books for new friends

Ruffa Mae Quinto: "I don't like furniture for Christmas because I have no more space for it. I like to give **Jolina, Rustom, Jean Garcia, Pia Guanio, Paolo Bediones** and **Raymond Gutierrez** books or audio books which they can take with them anywhere they go and be reminded of me. It's my first Christmas with them as my new close friends."

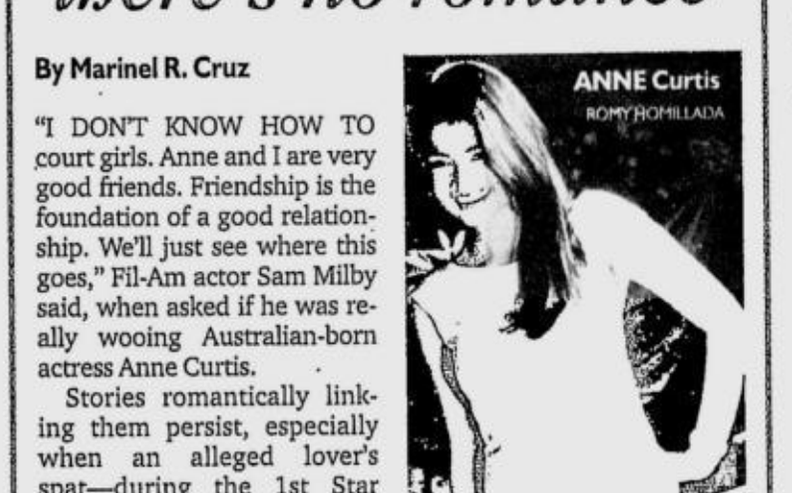
Only an iPhone

John Prats: "I don't want to receive a cell phone unless it's an iPhone (laughs). I wanna give **Luis Manzano** a pair of shades."

No to fruitcakes

Jolina Magdangal: "I won't welcome fruitcake as a gift because I'm not fond of it. I in-

GIFTS/ D4



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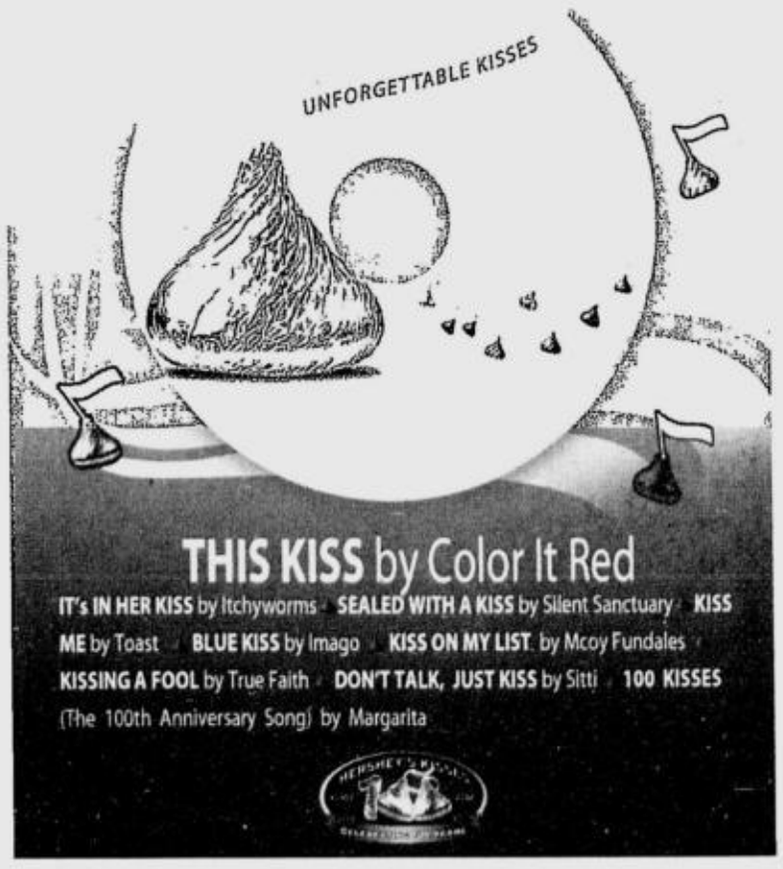
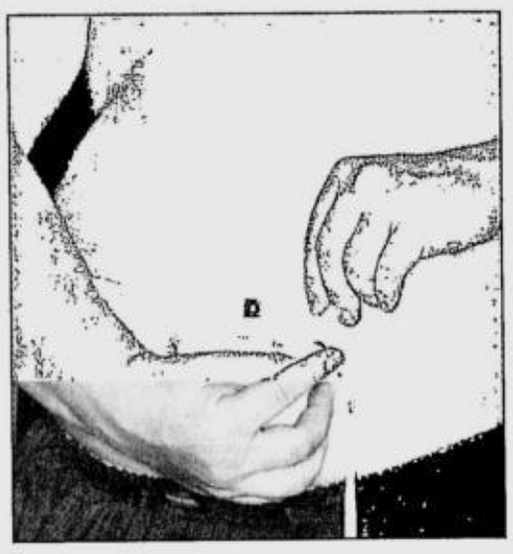


THE BEER BELLY REDUCER

Fast And Easy Inch-Loss For Men



For men who want to lose that bulging and unsightly belly quickly and easily, now there is a solution! Plastic surgeons have invented a machine that can "melt away" stubborn tummy fat in a patient's lunchbreak – **ULTRASHAPE**. This treatment gets rid of unwanted bulges and, unlike liposuction, does not require surgery. It's very effective in removing excess stomach fat, love handles or fat in other areas.

FAST, EFFECTIVE and SAFE, it's the most advanced non-invasive method of fat reduction to date. It works by focusing high frequency ultrasound waves from outside the body to targeted areas. These ultrasound waves break down fat cells without damaging blood vessels or other tissues. The fat cells are then eliminated through natural processes over a period of about 3 weeks, in the same way the body dissipates the discoloration from a bruise.

Ultrashape was founded 5 years ago in USA by Ami Glicksman M.D., formerly a senior plastic surgeon and Yoram Eshel, PhD, MBA, a leading expert in high-power ultrasound technology. When they developed Ultrashape, it was well known that ultrasound waves were able to break down and destroy fat cells, releasing the fat contained within them. Glicksman and Eshel built on that to come up with the unique concept of Ultrashape.

Ultrashape is the first and only non-surgical fat-destroying treatment. It promises a reduction of up to 2 cm. in a single session. It is such a hassle-free procedure. You walk in, get the treatment and go straight to your next appointment. It's as easy as that. Absolutely no anesthesia, no pain and no recovery is needed. Patients can resume their normal activities right after a treatment. It does not have the risks

Ultrashape promises an average loss of about 2 cm. in a single treatment.

of liposuction and can be used to effectively deal with problem areas of fat.

Normally about 4 or 5 sessions are recommended to fully achieve the result required. Both men and women who have tried it were impressed by the immediate results after just a single session. Proven effective, Ultrashape is definitely a breakthrough in fat reduction.

Ultrashape is now available at **Marie France FOR MEN**. Call 813-7959 for your free consultation. All consultations and treatments are strictly conducted in private.

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7 ENCHANTED 12:40 3:00
THE KINGDOM 5:20 7:40 10:00

3 indieSine: KONTRA AGOS
1:00 3:00 4:30 7:00 9:00

8 BATANES
1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00

4 BEOWULF
12:20 2:45 5:10

9 ONE MORE CHANCE
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

5 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

10 EASTERN PROMISES
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now showing at Robinsons Movieworld indieSine

KONTRA-AGOS: A Resistance Film Festival, celebrates films that go against the current, whether it be of popular cinema, politics or conventional ideas of love, sex and gender. Kontra Agos will present over the course of a week a range of films, past and present, that are politically, historically and formally subversive.

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2 indieSine: TUKSO
12:55 2:40 4:25 6:10 7:55 9:40

7 PASUKOB
12:20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:20 10:00

Midtown

3 BEOWULF 12:00 2:10 4:20
HITMAN 6:35 8:20 10:00

1 EASTERN PROMISES
12:25 2:20 4:15 6:10 8:05 10:00

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THE GOLDEN COMPASS 4:40 7:00 9:25

2 BATANES
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5 ONE MORE CHANCE
12:40 2:55 5:10 7:25 9:40

3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

A FILM BY SOCKIE FERNANDEZ

GULONG is about friendship, love and life. The story is told from the point-of-view of Apao, a smart, kindhearted boy whose quest for an old bicycle reveals the stuff he is made of. With him on this adventure are his insan Momoy and his best friend Tom-Tom. The story begins with a question: How are our 3 friends going to spend their summer vacation? Tom-Tom suggests that they go to his uncle's fishpond, an hour bike ride from where they live. Apao and Momoy have a problem as they don't own a bike! There are no jeeps and it is too far to walk. Momoy finds an old bicycle but the owner, an old woman named Tita Maggie, will only give it to him if he pays her a hundred pesos. He agrees and promises to come back with the money the next day. This starts a series of events which affects Apao, his friends, his family and even his community. In the end, a discarded 40-year old bicycle connects the past to present and becomes a catalyst for healing old wounds and reviving a love affair that has long been left for dead.

MTRCB Rating: G

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HITMAN 5:00 7:00 9:00

2 PASUKOB
12:30 2:40 4:50 7:00 9:10

6 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
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3 ONE MORE CHANCE
11:20 1:40 4:00 6:25 9:00

7 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
11:10 1:40 4:10 6:40 9:10

4 THE KINGDOM
12:05 2:15 4:25 6:35 9:00

8 BATANES
11:50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:10

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2 PASUKOB
3 ENCHANTED
4 BATANES

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2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3 PASUKOB
4 BATANES

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2 FRED CLAUS
3 PASUKOB
4 BATANES

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2 PASUKOB
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1 PASUKOB
2 THE KINGDOM
3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
4 BATANES

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1 GAME PLAN
2 PASUKOB
3 BATANES
4 THE GOLDEN COMPASS

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2 BEOWULF
3 BATANES

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4 WE OWN THE NIGHT
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3 PASUKOB
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5 BATANES
6 WE OWN THE NIGHT

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1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 THE KINGDOM
3 BATANES
4 PASUKOB

starmall EDSA/SHAW
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7268150

3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
4 (Dolby Digital EX) BATANES
5

metropolis star cinema
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504286, 5433994

1 BATANES
2 PASUKOB
3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
4 BEOWULF

THEATRES

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 PASUKOB
3 BATANES

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-5271

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 PASUKOB
3
4

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 EASTERN PROMISES
2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3 PASUKOB / HITMAN
4 ENCHANTED
5 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
6 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
7 THE KINGDOM
8 RESERVED
9 ONE MORE CHANCE
10 BATANES

Blue Wave Marikina
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sta. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341527

1 (Dolby) THE GOLDENT COMPASS
2 (Dolby) BATANES
3 (Dolby) THE GOLDENT COMPASS
4 (Dolby) PASUKOB

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto tel 7334228

1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 THE GOLDENT COMPASS
5 BATANES

THE MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1 BATANES
2 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 PASUKOB

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274

1 PASUKOB
2 THE GOLDENT COMPASS
3 BATANES

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)-(4449346)

1 LIONS FOR LAMBS / BEOWULF
2 THE GOLDENT COMPASS

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5003 to 03

1 THE GOLDENT COMPASS
2 BATANES
3 PASUKOB
4 GAME PLAN

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1 PASUKOB
2 BATANES

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72

1 (Dolby) ENCHANTED
2 (Dolby) THE GOLDENT COMPASS
3 (Dolby) THE GOLDENT COMPASS
4 (Dolby) THE KINGDOM

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1 BATANES
2 PASUKOB
3 THE GOLDENT COMPASS
4

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146

1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1 BATANES
2 PASUKOB
3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729

1 BATANES
2 PASUKOB
3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
4 BEOWULF

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320

1 GOLDEN COMPASS
2 BATANES
3 PASUKOB

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736

1 BATANES
2 PASUKOB

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748

1 GHOST SON
2 ONE MORE CHANCE

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 BATANES
2 SAGIK SA PAG IBIG
3 LAMAT
4 PASUKOB

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 SEX SCANDAL
3 BATANES
4 PASUKOB
5 THE GOLDEN COMPASS

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 BATANES
3 PASUKOB
4 BEOWULF

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029

1 PLEASE CALL
2

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

POWER PLANT CINEMA
ROCKWELL CENTER, MAKATI TEL: 898-1440/41 DOLBY DIGITAL

FRED CLAUS G 12:50,3:10,5:30,7:50	THE GOLDEN COMPASS PG13 1:40,4;10,6:40,9:10	ENCHANTED G 12:30,2:50,5:10,7:30
THE KINGDOM R13 12:30,2.55,5;20, 7:45,10:10	EASTERN PROMISES R13 1:10,3:25,5:40, 7:55,10:10	THE GOLDEN COMPASS PG13 12:30,3:00,5;30, 8:00,10:30

MOVIES & SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

GREENHILLS CINEMAS
GREENHILLS SHOPPING CENTER, ORTIGAS AVENUE, GREENHILLS, SAN JUAN, METRO MANILA

THEATRE MALL GREENHILLS
a landmark reinvented!

NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 1 — ENCHANTED / HITMAN — 11:00, 1:20, 3:40 // 6:00, 8:20, 10:35 — GP // R-13

CINEMA 2 — EASTERN PROMISES — 11:00, 1:20, 3:40, 6:00, 8:20, 10:35 — R-13

DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

PROMENADE GREENHILLS
...a dinetertainment for all!

NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 3 — THE GOLDEN COMPASS — 11:20, 2:10, 5:00, 7:50, 10:40 — GP

CINEMA 4 — THE KINGDOM — 11:00, 1:20, 3:40, 6:00, 8:20, 10:35 — R-13

CINEMA 5 — THE GOLDEN COMPASS — 10:40, 1:30, 4:20, 7:10, 10:00 — GP

TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722 4496.

MUSIC MUSEUM

December 14, 2007	Mark Herras	8:00 PM
December 15, 2007	The Company	8:00 PM
December 19, 2007	Pilita Corales, Dolphy, Malou Barry	8:30 PM
December 28, 2007	Pooh	8:00 PM

TEATRINO PROMENADE GREENHILLS

December 20, 2007	Jed Madela	8:00 PM
December 8, 28 & 29, 2007	Drag - Ons	10:00 PM

FOR INQUIRIES PLS. CALL 722-4532 LOC 116

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FREE ADMISSION!

Eastwood City
Tel: 687-6770 • 0917-8-EWCITY

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

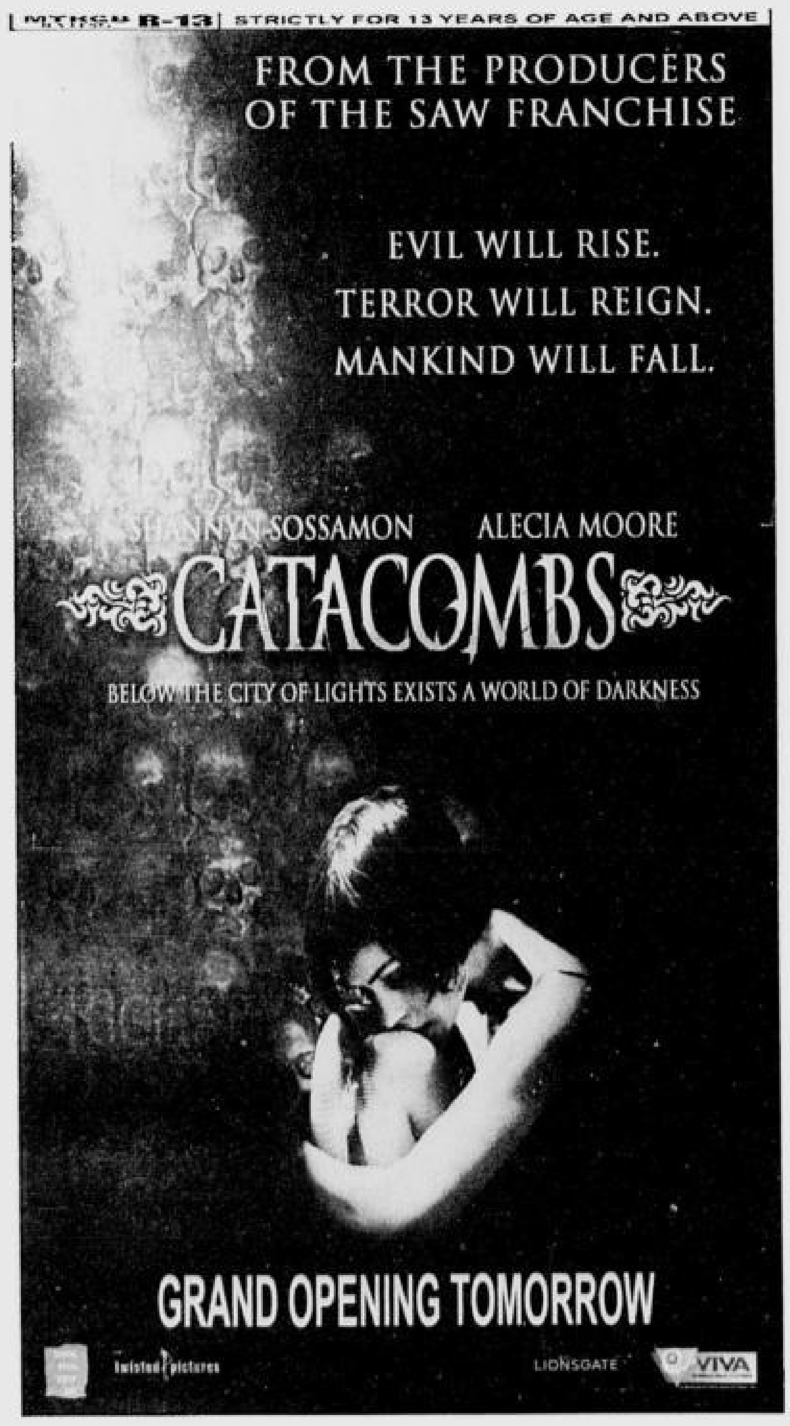
Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City
E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave. (C-5) Quezon City

To receive Eastwood City Events, Promos and Cinema schedule just text eastwood and send to 2948 — Globe, Smart & Sun Cellular subscribers

For inquiries, call
687-6963
GUARANTEED SEATS
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

1	ENCHANTED 2:35, 5:15, 7:55, 10:35 G
2	THE GOLDEN COMPASS 1:40, 4:40, 7:40, 10:40 PG-13
3	THE GOLDEN COMPASS 2:10, 5:10, 8:10 PG-13
4	THE KINGDOM 2:35, 5:15, 7.55,10:35 R-13

MTRCB R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND ABOVE



Schedule of EVENTS

DECEMBER 10 (Monday)

1:00 - 3:00PM Shorts 1
3:00 - 4:30PM Adjani Arumpac: Walai
4:30 - 7:00PM Shorts 3
7:00 - 9:00PM Voice, Tilted Screens and Extended Scenes of Lone-liness: Filipinos in High Definition
9:00 - 10:30PM Shorts 2

DECEMBER 11 (Tuesday)

1:00 - 4:00PM Waise Azimi: Waking Up
4:00 - 6:30PM Shorts 2
6:30 - 8:00PM The Singh Family Home Videos
Ehemplo
8:00 - 10:30PM Shorts 3
Closing Films: Gopal Menon
10:30 - 12:00MN Naga Story: The Other Side of Silence

Southern Tagalog Exposure
Digital Cheese

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Independent Filmmakers Cooperative

Tickets P50
www.kontra-agos.blogspot.com
kontra_agos@yahoo.com

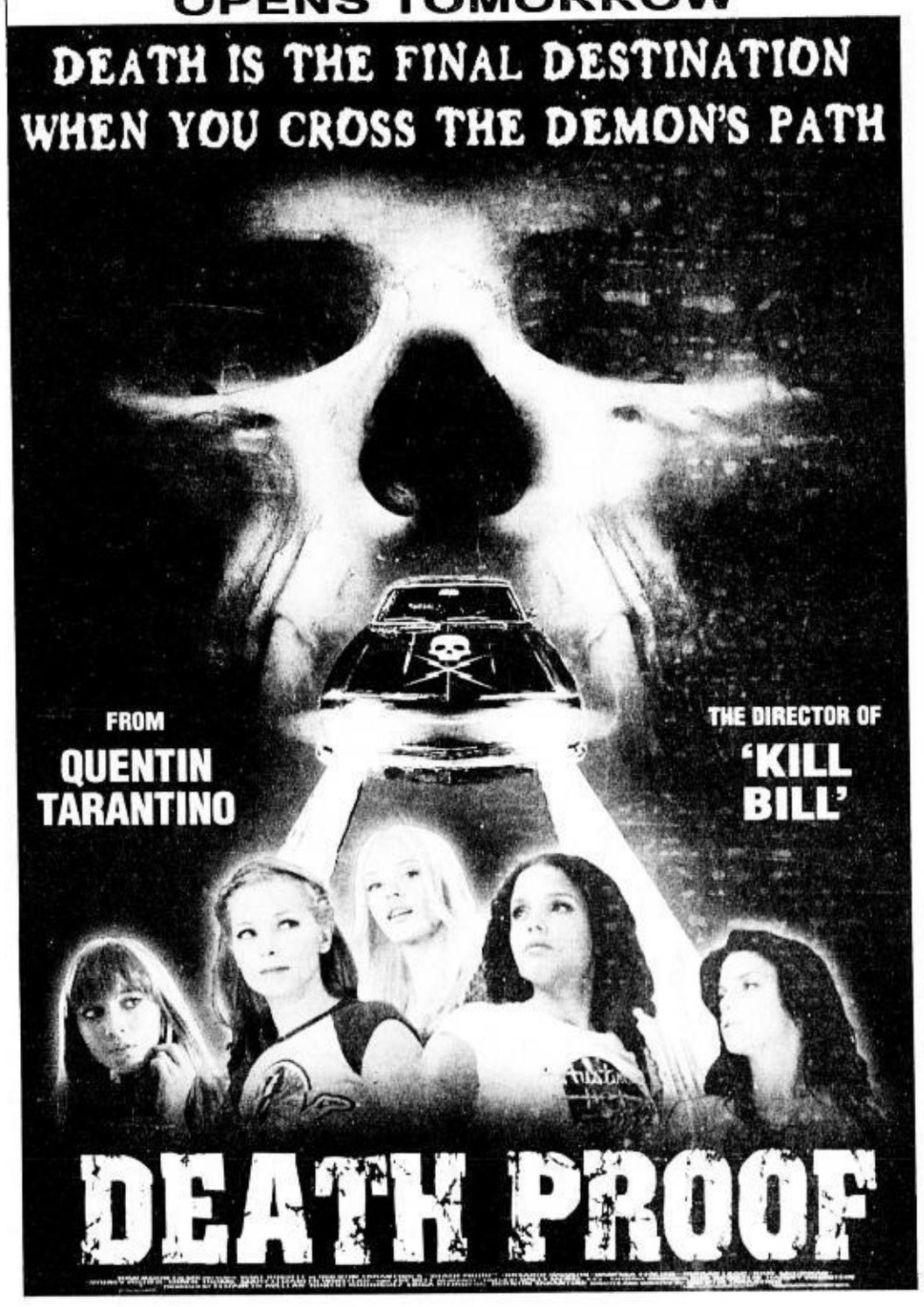
Kontra-Agos
Resistance Film Festival
5-11 December 2007 Engelstad Robinson's Galleria

DECEMBER 05 to 11

MTRCB RATING ▶ R-13 | STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND UP.

OPENS TOMORROW

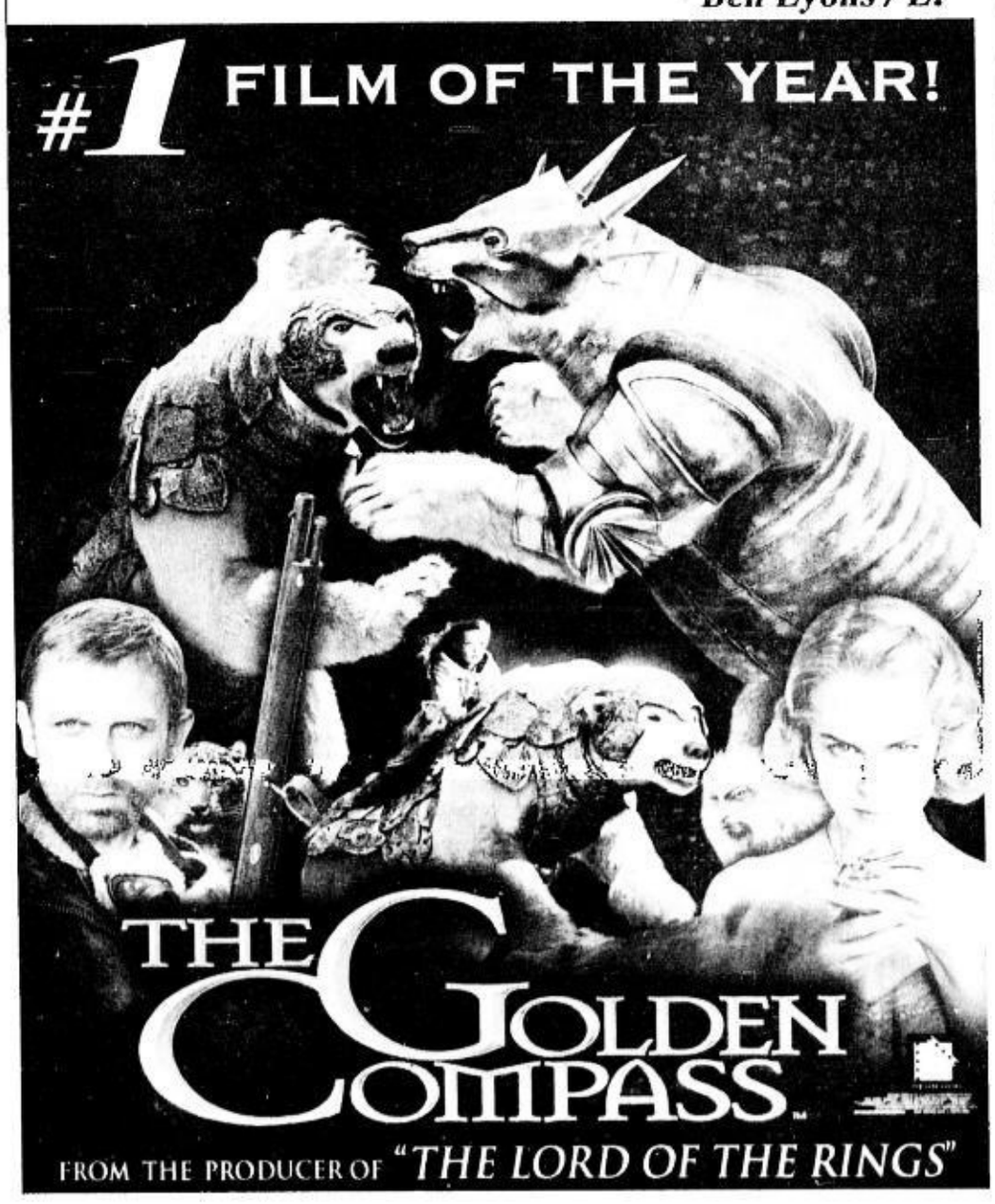
DEATH IS THE FINAL DESTINATION
WHEN YOU CROSS THE DEMON'S PATH



MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13 | Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult

NOW SHOWING

"IN THE TRADITION OF *THE LORD OF THE RINGS* AND *HARRY POTTER*, **THE GOLDEN COMPASS** TAKES ITS PLACE AMONGST THE **GREAT FANTASY FILMS** OF ALL TIME."
Ben Lyons / E!



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Watch the epic battle of legendary heroes like it has never been seen before in the newest breakthrough in Philippine cinema

BEOWULF
IN DIGITAL 3D

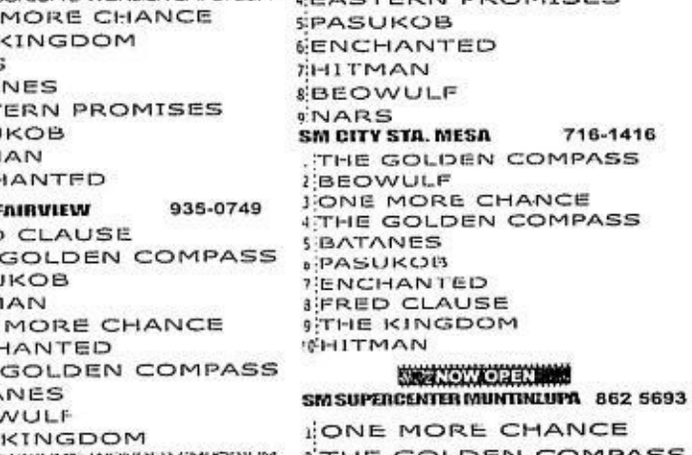
Experience **CLARITY** in vision and sound (with no scratches or ghosting)
Guaranteed **PERFECTION** in projection (even after several runs)
Full **IMMERSE** action with polarized 3D glasses (that you can bring home after the movie)

NOW SHOWING AT
THE BLOCK CINEMA 1, SM CITY NORTH EDSA
The one, only, and true digital cinema in the country today

TICKETS NOW AVAILABLE
P 300 (Reserved Seats)

Screening Schedule:
12:00 p.m., 3:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m., 9:00 p.m.
Please call 929 5452 for inquiries.

In partnership with Array's Technology Inc.



METRO MANILA

SM MALL OF ASIA 556-0104
IMAX
BEOWULF 3D Admission Price: P400
1:30 PM • 4:00 PM • 6:30 PM • 9:00 PM
DEEP SEA 3D Admission Price: P250
12:00 PM
1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 HITMAN
3 ENCHANTED
4 THE KINGDOM
5 PASUKOB
6 BATANES
PREMIERE CINEMA
ONE MORE CHANCE
CENTERSTAGE
THE GOLDEN COMPASS
DIRECTOR'S CLUB
Bookings now accepted. Inquire at 556-2314.
THE PODIUM
CINEMA 1
THE KINGDOM
CINEMA 2
THE GOLDEN COMPASS
For ticket reservations, dial 6338976
All major credit cards accepted

SM NORTH EDSA 929-5452
1 BEOWULF (DIGITAL 3D)
2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3 ENCHANTED
4 HITMAN
ONE MORE CHANCE
THE KINGDOM
THE GOLDEN COMPASS
8 BATANES
MR. MAGORIUM'S WONDER EMPORIUM
10 EASTERN PROMISES
11 PASUKOB
12 BEOWULF

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901
1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 BEOWULF
3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
MR. MAGORIUM'S WONDER EMPORIUM
5 ONE MORE CHANCE
6 THE KINGDOM
7 NARS
8 BATANES
9 EASTERN PROMISES
10 PASUKOB
11 HITMAN
12 ENCHANTED

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
1 FRED CLAUSE
2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3 PASUKOB
4 HITMAN
5 ONE MORE CHANCE
6 ENCHANTED
7 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
8 BATANES
9 BEOWULF
10 THE KINGDOM
11 MR. MAGORIUM'S WONDER EMPORIUM
12 NARS

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 BATANES
3 PASUKOB
4 THE KINGDOM

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 THE KINGDOM
3 ENCHANTED
4 BATANES/ NARS
5 PASUKOB
6 ONE MORE CHANCE

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975
1 BATANES
2 PASUKOB
3 GOLDEN COMPASS
4 THE KINGDOM

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888
1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 BATANES
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 EASTERN PROMISES
5 PASUKOB
6 ENCHANTED
7 HITMAN
8 BEOWULF
9 NARS

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 BEOWULF
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
5 BATANES
6 PASUKOB
7 ENCHANTED
8 FRED CLAUSE
9 THE KINGDOM
10 HITMAN

NOW OPEN
SM SUPERCENTER MUNTINLUPA 862 5693
1 ONE MORE CHANCE
2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3 THE KINGDOM
4 PASUKOB

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240
1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 THE KINGDOM
BATANES
4 PASUKOB
5 ONE MORE CHANCE
THE GOLDEN COMPASS
BEOWULF
8 EASTERN PROMISES
9 NARS
10 MR. MAGORIUM'S WONDER EMPORIUM
11 HITMAN
12 ENCHANTED

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917
1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 BEOWULF
3 PASUKOB
4 ONE MORE CHANCE

Watch one of this year's most anticipated films at SM Cinema and bring home exclusive items in the

THE GOLDEN COMPASS
WATCH-AND-WIN PROMO

Buy 2 tickets of the movie at any participating SM Cinema branch in Metro Manila for your chance to win any of these exclusive items:

Shirts | Metal Ornaments | Lunch Coolers | Key Chains

Over 100 items to be given away!
Please see promo banners for more details
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 4639, Series of 2007

NOW SHOWING

Distributed by PINE STAR FILMS, INC.
Media Partner

SM CITY BACOOR (046)417-3868
1 HITMAN
2 ENCHANTED
3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
4 ONE MORE CHANCE
5 BATANES
6 PASUKOB
7 THE KINGDOM
8 BEOWULF

SM CITY MARILAO (044)9332013-17
1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 PASUKOB/ FRED CLAUSE
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 THE KINGDOM/ BEOWULF

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO (046)474-3160
1 PASUKOB
2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 BATANES

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4323201-04
1 THE GAME PLAN
2 HITMAN
3 PASUKOB
4 THE GOLDEN COMPASS

SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998
1 HITMAN
2 NARS/ BATANES
3 PASUKOB
4 11TH HOUR
5 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
6 THE GOLDEN COMPASS

SM CAGAYAN DE ORO (088)859-2884
1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 HITMAN
3 PASUKOB
4 BEOWULF

LUZON

NOW OPEN
SM CITY TAYTAY 286-2502 to 04
1 PASUKOB
2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3 BATANES

SM CITY LIPA (043) 784-0187
1 ONE MORE CHANCE
2 PASUKOB
3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
4 BEOWULF

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)0637681-85
1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 THE GAMEPLAN
3 BEOWULF
4 BATANES
5 ONE MORE CHANCE
6 PASUKOB

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5349811
1 ONE MORE CHANCE
2 BATANES
3 FRED CLAUSE/ PASUKOB
4 THE GOLDEN COMPASS

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80
1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 ONE MORE CHANCE
3 PASUKOB
4 HITMAN

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6197838-39
1 ENCHANTED/ LIONS FOR LAMBS
2 PASUKOB
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 THE GOLDEN COMPASS

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45
1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 ENCHANTED
3 THE GAME PLAN
4 ONE MORE CHANCE
5 PASUKOB
6 BATANES

SM CITY BATANGAS 885-6401-04
1 LIONS FOR LAMBS
2 ONE MORE CHANCE
3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
4 PASUKOB

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422
1 THE GAME PLAN
2 BATANES
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
5 ENCHANTED
6 THE KINGDOM
7 RESERVED
8 PASUKOB

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876
1 HITMAN
2 ENCHANTED
3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
4 THE NANNY DIARIES
5 ONE MORE CHANCE
6 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
7 PASUKOB
8 BATANES

SM CITY BACOLOD (034) 708 1010
1 THE GAME PLAN
2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3 LIONS FOR LAMBS
4 PASUKOB

SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MOVIE LISTING, MTRCB RATING, SCREENING SCHEDULES AND THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA

Gifts that stars...

From page D1

tend to give Rufa Mae Quinto a prayer book for busy people because *dami niyang* blessings and rackets so *dapat dala niya ang* prayer book so she can pray even while at work."

Plane ticket for mom

Sheryl Cruz: "I won't enjoy receiving shorts because it's not my usual get-up and I hardly go to the beach. Even if my mom (**Rosemarie Sonora**) is no longer active in show biz, she remains to be a star in my heart. I plan to give her a round trip ticket from the US to Manila so she can come for a long overdue visit."

Not the same gift

Say Alonzo: "I dread to receive a gift that I gave to someone else. I wish I could treat **Uma Khouny** to a US holiday because he's never been there. I will join him so we can have some bonding time."

Anything but socks

Paulene Luna: "I won't be too happy to receive socks. Anything but that. I'll give my super good friend **Mark Herras** the latest style of his fave rubber shoes brand."

E-mail wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com.

Sam, Anne...

From page D1

later guested, Anne refused to discuss the incident.

At a recent gathering to promote their new drama series "Maging Sino Ka Man: Ang Pagbabalik," Anne insisted, "I'm not the type who would hide the status of my love life. I just have nothing to admit at the moment. Sam and I used to hang out, but we have decided to stay friends for now."

She added: "No one is courting me right now. Should anyone express interest, I'll let everyone know."

Sam and Anne said that on the set of the new series, where they play an embattled couple, they see to it that personal issues do not get in the way of work.

The new series starts six months after lead characters Eli (John Lloyd Cruz) and Jackie (Bea Alonzo) tied the knot.

"It has new characters who will complicate the lives of our heroes," said director Rory B. Quintos.

The show premiered last night on ABS-CBN. Also in the cast are Chin-Chin Gutierrez, Rosanna Roces, Philip Salvador, Derek Ramsay, Angelica Panganiban, Toni Gonzaga, and Christopher de Leon.

A FILM BY SOCKIE FERNANDEZ

GULONG is about friendship, love and life. The story is told from the point-of-view of Apao, a smart, kindhearted boy whose quest for an old bicycle reveals the stuff he is made of. With him on this adventure are his insan Momoy and his best friend Tom-Tom. The story begins with a question: How are our 3 friends going to spend their summer vacation? Tom-Tom suggests that they go to his uncle's fishpond, an hour bike ride from where they live. Apao and Momoy have a problem as they don't own a bike! There are no jeeps and it is too far to walk. Momoy finds an old bicycle but the owner, an old woman named Tita Maggie, will only give it to him if he pays her a hundred pesos. He agrees and promises to come back with the money the next day. This starts a series of events which affects Apao, his friends, his family and even his community. In the end, a discarded 40-year old bicycle connects the past to present and becomes a catalyst for healing old wounds and reviving a love affair that has long been left for dead

MTRCB Rating: G

watch this only at Robinsons Movieworld Ermita
December 05 to 11

INDIESINE

SHANG CINEPLEX

1 CLOSED FOR A PRIVATE EVENT

2 GOLDEN COMPASS MTRCB PG-13 12:20, 3:20, 6:20, 9:20

3 ENCHANTED MTRCB GP 2:15, 4:40, 7:05, 9:30

4 THE KINGDOM MTRCB R-13 2:00, 4:20, 6:40, 9:00

PREMIERE THEATRE: THE GOLDEN COMPASS MTRCB PG-13 12:50, 3:50, 6:50, 9:50

Movies and schedules are subject to change without prior notice

Catch the Cineplex Special

ERRATUM: RATING FOR GOLDEN COMPASS IS PG-13 AND NOT GP AS INDICATED YESTERDAY.

6th floor, Shangri-La Plaza Mall
EDSA corner Shaw Blvd., Mandaluyong City
Call 633-2227 or 633-4735 for more details.

Shangri-La Plaza

Araneta Center araneta center.net | Gateway | MALL | FarmersPlaza | Farmers Market

Gateway CINEPLEX 10 EXPERIENCE THE DIFFERENCE

PLATINUM CINEMA

GOLDEN COMPASS	BATANES	EASTERN PROMISES	BEOWULF	GOLDEN COMPASS
2:00 | 3:20 | 4:30 | 7:00 | 8:20 | 9:30	1:15 | 4:00 | 6:45 | 9:30	2:30 | 4:50 | 7:10 | 9:30	12:50 | 5:50	4:00 | 6:30 | 9:00

COMPLETELY UNOBSTRUCTED VIEWS — DOLBY DIGITAL-EX

ONE MORE CHANCE	THE KINGDOM	HITMAN	PASUKOB	ENCHANTED
12:45 | 3:40 | 6:35 | 9:30	12:10 | 4:50 | 9:30	2:30 | 7:10	1:50 | 4:20 | 6:50 | 9:20	1:45 | 4:20 | 6:55 | 9:30

ARANETA COLISEUM

BARNEY
LET'S IMAGINE TOUR
DEC 19 TO 23

For reservations, call 911-5555 or log on to ticketnet.com.ph, aranetacoliseum.com or aranetacenter.net

METRO

Citizen's Call

Our City of Affections and Disaffections is made up of stories. Your stories. Tell us all about it.

- Did a signage make your day?
- Garbage dumped on your street unmake your day?
- Street diggings forever on the street where you live?
- Are you up in arms against the demolition of an ancestral house?
- Awed by a little-known barangay project with a big positive impact in your community?
- Got stuck in potholes?
- Fed up with cussing and fouling neighbors?
- Is there an everyday role model in your neighborhood?
- Delightful/dreadful finds on your way to work?

JUST TEXT SMS: ccall name/age/location <message>
MMS: <insert photo> ccall name/age/location <caption/message>

Please don't send tips on criminal activities and scams. Call the police.

INQUIRER

AT THE CINEMAS

Reserve your tickets by texting SURESEATS G83 or SURESEATS G4 to 2333 (Globe) or 211 (Smart) or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.
Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification, please call 729-7777

GLORIETTA 1	1 ONE MORE CHANCE	2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	3 BATANES	4 PASUKOB
GLORIETTA 4	1 ENCHANTED	2 THE KINGDOM	3 THX THE GOLDEN COMPASS GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 THE NAMESAKE	5 THE HITMAN	6 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	7 GONE BABY GONE
GREENBELT 1	1 ENCHANTED		2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	
GREENBELT 3	1 THX THE GOLDEN COMPASS GUARANTEED SEATS		2 THX THE GOLDEN COMPASS GUARANTEED SEATS	
	3 GONE BABY GONE GUARANTEED SEATS	4 EASTERN PROMISE GUARANTEED SEATS	5 FRED CLAUS GUARANTEED SEATS	
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX THE GOLDEN COMPASS		2 THE KINGDOM	
	3 EASTERN PROMISES	4 ENCHANTED	5 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	
AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	2 30 DAYS OF NIGHT	3 THE NANNY DIARIES	4 THE KINGDOM
MARKET! MARKET!	1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS		2 THE KINGDOM	
	3 ONE MORE CHANCE	4 BATANES	5 PASUKOB	
TRINOMA	1 BATANES	2 ONE MORE CHANCE	3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS GUARANTEED SEATS	4 EASTERN PROMISES GUARANTEED SEATS
• THX Certified • All-Digital Sound • All-Stadium Seating • Computerized Ticketing System • Recliner Seats	5 ENCHANTED	6 THE KINGDOM	7 THX THE GOLDEN COMPASS GUARANTEED SEATS	

AT THE MALLS

CONCIERGE HOTLINE NUMBERS:
Glorietta - 752 7272
Greenbelt - 757 4853 to 54
Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; 772 1860
Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc. 324
Market! Market! - 886 7519
TriNoma - 901 3000

Ayala

glorietta — Philippine Madrigal Singers with Robert Seña and Isay Alvarez
December 8; 6pm; Glorietta 4 Park

GREENBELT — The Dawn Jazz Nights
December 5; 7:30pm; Greenbelt 2 Al Fresco Area

ALABANG TOWN CENTER — Southern Musicians Concert
December 9; 5pm; Town Plaza

AYALA CENTER CEBU — FREE Christmas Gift Bag for every P500 worth of purchase.
See leaflets for details. Per DTI-Cebu Permit No. 584, Series of 2007
December 1 to 31

MARKET! MARKET! — Christmas Shoes: A Christmas Musicale
December 6; 7pm; Activity Center

Greenbelt Onstage — Repertory Philippines presents FIDDLER ON THE ROOF
November 9 - December 16, 2007
For inquiries, pls. call 887-0710
or visit www.repertory-philippines.com

Ayala MUSEUM — WATER: THE MEDIUM by Juvenal Sanso
November 24 to January 13, 2008; Ground Floor Gallery
For more info, pls. call 757-7117 to 21 loc. 14 or email museum_inquiry@ayalamuseum.org

TriNoma — Christmas Chorale featuring Martin Nievera
December 6; 6pm; Activity Center

Rhythm Academy: Sam Concepcion with the Augustinian Larks
December 9; 6pm; Activity Center

Watch THE GOLDEN COMPASS at THX CERTIFIED CINEMAS

EXPERIENCE THE MAGIC AS IT WAS TRULY CREATED FOR YOU

THX Cinemas. True to life. True to movies.

For screening schedules, pls. call 729-7777
Log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservation

The Cat in The Hat Live only at Ayala Malls!

SEUSSICAL THE MUSICAL

With "Seussical" The Musical, it's going to be a magical, whimsical and musical Christmas!

Nikki Gil, Roxanne Barcelo and Karylle as The Cat in The Hat.

Market! Market!	Alabang Town Center	TriNoma	Ayala Center Cebu	Glorietta
November 16 to 18	November 23 to 25	December 1 and 2	December 7 to 9	December 12 to 14
11:30 am, 3 pm, 6 pm	11:00 am, 3 pm, 6 pm	11:30 am, 3 pm, 6 pm	11:30 am, 3 pm, 6:30 pm	11:30 am, 3 pm, 6 pm
Concierge: 886 - 7519	Concierge: 842 - 2782, 772 - 1860	Concierge: 901 - 3000	Concierge: (032) 231 - 5342 local 324	Concierge: 752 - 7272

glorietta | GREENBELT | ALABANG TOWN CENTER | AYALA CENTER CEBU | MARKET! MARKET! | TriNoma

A diario novela by CARLO J. CAPARAS

To have and to hold

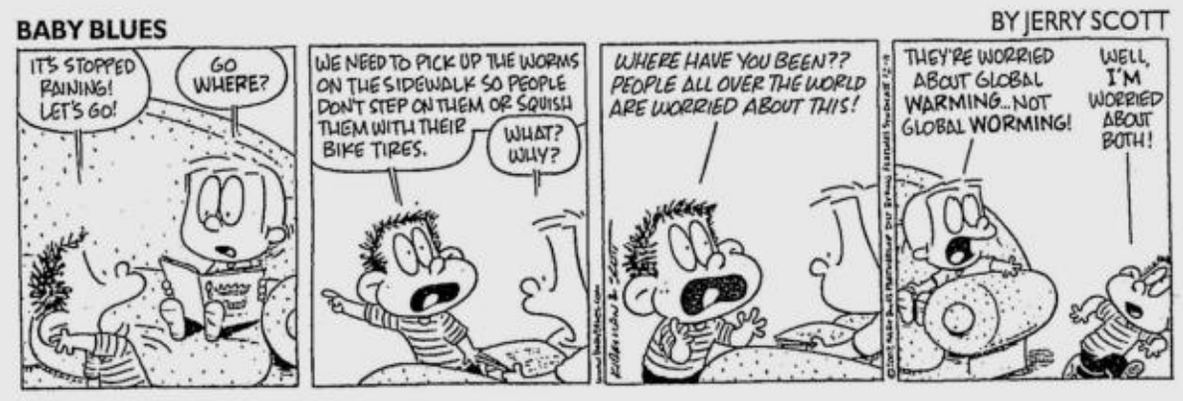
Art: ARNEL A. AVETRIA

A. LIPIN — BY JESS ABRERA

PUGAD BABOY — BY P.M. JUNIOR

GARFIELD — BY JIM DAVIS

BABY BLUES — BY JERRY SCOTT



ATOMO AND WEBOY — BY LYRA GARCELLANO

LOVEKNOTS — BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

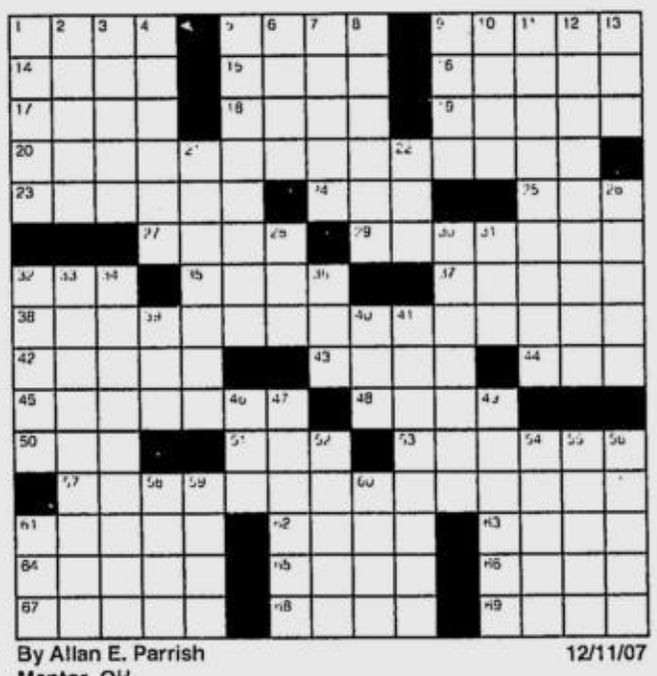
KIKO MACHINE — BY MANIX ABRERA

BEN — BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Richie's mom, to the Fonz
5 Round dance
9 Rot
14 Stereo brand
15 Seth's boy
16 To-do list listings
17 Peter the Great, e.g.
18 Off-peak period
19 Twangy sounding
20 Sam Cooke hit
23 Verdi opera
24 Funding grp.
25 Writer Wallace
27 Sch. in Manhattan
29 Coin-toss time
32 & more
35 Oslo waterway
37 Raze
38 Ray Charles hit
42 "__ Hall"
43 TV football analyst Collingsworth
44 UFO crew
45 Statistical compilation
48 Far East
50 J.H.S. subj.
51 __-10 Conference
53 "Honor Thy Father" author
57 R. Dean Taylor hit
61 Port on the Seine
62 Drop shot
63 Cato's way
64 Head-to-head competitions
65 Kathryn of "Law & Order: Criminal Intent"
66 Bamako's country
67 Plus feature
68 Wail
69 Up to the job

DOWN
1 Dull surface
2 Stair part
3 Proust character
4 Longtime Carson character
5 1952 Olympics site
6 Heavy burden
7 1997 N.L. Rookie of the Year
8 Dozing
9 Actress Merrill
10 List-shortening abbr.
11 That's life, in Paris
12 Wonder
13 Fashion letters
21 Boxes up
22 Armed hostilities
26 Melts metals together
28 Vote for
30 Blissful
31 Precious stone
32 Bygone oath
33 Unyielding
34 Rolls on
36 Mythical bird
39 Narrow inlet
40 Shooters' grp.
41 Off, in a way
46 Clean-air grp.
47 One behind the other
49 Nissan model
52 City on the Nile
54 Cornerstone abbr.
55 Aroma
56 Weird
58 Removal directive
59 Part of RPI
60 Hoops grp. for females
61 Letters on vitamins



By Allan E. Parrish
Mentor, OH
12/11/07

Monday's Puzzle Solved

J	O	W	L		P	A	R	C		S	I	M	B	A
O	P	I	E		U	T	A	H		O	N	K	E	Y
S	I	N	G	A	P	O	R	E		O	T	T	E	R
H	A	G	A	R		B	E	R	A	T	E			
			T	R	P		R	I	C	H	A	R	D	I
P	A	P	O	O	S	E			H	E	R	E	O	N
A	L	I		Y	A	C	K	S		S	S	G	T	
W	K	S		O	T	H	E	L	L	O		A	I	R
P	A	T	S			O	N	I	O	N		L	E	O
A	L	I	O	T	O			D	R	Y	N	E	S	S
W	I	L	L	I	A	M	I		E	X	E			
			A	T	T	A	C	H		E	R	E	C	T
S	H	A	R	I		L	O	U	I	S	V	I	I	I
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12/11/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're hardworking, dedicated and purposeful in whatever you approach in life. You generally finish what you begin, and you tackle serious subjects or projects. You're extremely goal-directed. You're willing to undergo difficulties, even physical deprivation, to get what you want. You're strong and courageous. Your year ahead is beautifully social, promoting friendships and romantic partnerships. Enjoy!

Birthdate of: Rita Moreno, actress; Big Mama Thornton, blues legend; Jim Harrison, writer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You might be unusually concerned about something in the media today. Similarly, you have very strong views about politics or religion.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Your desire to become a better person or to do anything that will promote self-betterment is very strong today. This is a good thing. It won't be wasted.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Relations with partners and close friends are extremely powerful today. One of you wants to be in control of the other. This is because one of you thinks you know what's best. (But do you?)

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You will work tirelessly today with great determination to achieve whatever you want. Nothing is too much trouble. Just don't overdo it. (You're relentless!)

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Three areas of your life are unusually strong today: relations with children, anything having to do with the arts or sports and romance. You will move mountains to make something happen.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You will make changes for the better at home today. You can find new uses for existing objects. You also can make changes for the better within your family relationships. What an opportunity!

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You have the mind of a detective today. In conversations with others, you probably will overpower others. You're perceptive, curious and looking for hidden meanings.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): New sources of income might come to you today in practical terms, or they might occur as an idea. Listen to what is possible. You could boost your future earnings!

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You'll make extraordinary efforts to achieve whatever you want today. Nothing will hold you back. In particular, many of you will make changes to your appearance or image.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Your ability to research anything or ferret out answers is remarkable today. You have the mind of Sherlock Holmes. ("Elementary, my dear Watson.")

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): A powerful friend or acquaintance could come into your life today. Someone will say something that rocks your socks. It could be a teaching lesson.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You might have a strong desire for power today. You feel compelled to do something that you want in your own way. Take it easy. Don't go overboard.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis SudoKu — By Dave Green

1	2				4			8
	8			1	9		7	5
8	7		5	4	1			
	1						5	
			6	2	7		3	1
7	6		1	5			8	
9			8				6	4

Difficulty Level ★★
12/11

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

1	8	5	6	7	3	9	4	2
7	4	6	5	9	2	8	1	3
9	3	2	4	1	8	7	5	6
3	6	7	8	4	5	1	2	9
2	1	9	3	6	7	4	8	5
4	5	8	9	2	1	6	3	7
8	7	4	2	3	9	5	6	1
5	9	3	1	8	6	2	7	4
6	2	1	7	5	4	3	9	8

Difficulty Level ★
12.10

BEN KINGSLEY and Annette Bening in "Mrs. Harris"

Portrait of the 'accidental killer' as victim

Only a truly gifted thespian like Bening could do full justice to the role

Nestor U. Torre

AT 9 TONIGHT, HBO PREMIERES THE film, "Mrs. Harris," which clinched Emmy and Golden Globe nominations. With **Annette Bening** in the title role, the HBO original movie tells the tragic tale of a prep-school headmistress who grabbed headlines in the 1980s with the alleged murder of her famous lover, the diet doctor, Dr. Herman Tarnower.

We have previewed the film, so we can share these "proof of the pudding" notes with prospective viewers:

Acting triumph

THE FILM is an acting triumph for Annette Bening, whose textured and painfully engaged portrayal of Mrs. Harris illumines the production from start to finish.

She plays the title character as poised, cultured, but psychologically deficient and dependent. After the society doctor sweeps her off her feet, she looks forward to marrying him—only to come crushing down to earth when he coldly calls the wedding off.

Instead of walking out of his life, however, Mrs. Harris hangs on for dear life, despite the humiliations she suffers. It isn't just obsessive love that keeps her in her doctor-lover's thrall—he has also made her dependent on the drugs that *he* provides.

Flashbacks

SO, Mrs. Harris tolerates her faithless lover's many flings, until she hears that he's proposed marriage to a younger woman—and she flips! She intends to kill herself, but things go terribly awry, and it's the doctor who dies.

What *really* happened? The film employs flashbacks and the recollections of diverse characters to get to the truth. But, the film's best suit isn't its "whydunnit" approach; it's the production's deft way of going *beyond* the scandal, to limn a revelatory and touching study of the so-called "accidental killer" as *victim*.

Mrs. Harris' character is so complex that only a truly gifted thespian like Bening could do full justice to it—and she does. Without even once sinking down to the level of weepy melodramatic, she bares her character's pathetic, wounded soul for everyone to learn valuable life lessons from.

Unconventional

DR. Tarnover is played by **Ben Kingsley**, who reveals a new side to his acting ethos in the production. It's been decades since "Gandhi," so Kingsley opts to play the smooth villain this time around—and he's equally effective in the unconventional role.

The fact that he isn't leading-man handsome even works in Kingsley's favor, because he shows how power and wealth can have an aphrodisiac effect on vulnerable women like Mrs. Harris. Other deft character turns are contributed by the experienced likes of **Frances Fisher** and **Cloris Leachman**.

Debit side

ON the debit side, some of the movie's flashbacks and testimonials eventually come off as a mite too repetitious, and too many points of view are expressed, so parts of the storytelling perplex instead of clarify.

But Bening's arresting portrayal never wavers in its focus and helps viewers make it through the occasional rough spot.

In the end, what matters isn't the crime or scandal; it's the film's insightful depictions of its main killer-victim as an example of how society keeps even some of its loveliest and most accomplished women in gilded subjugation.

First Christmas album

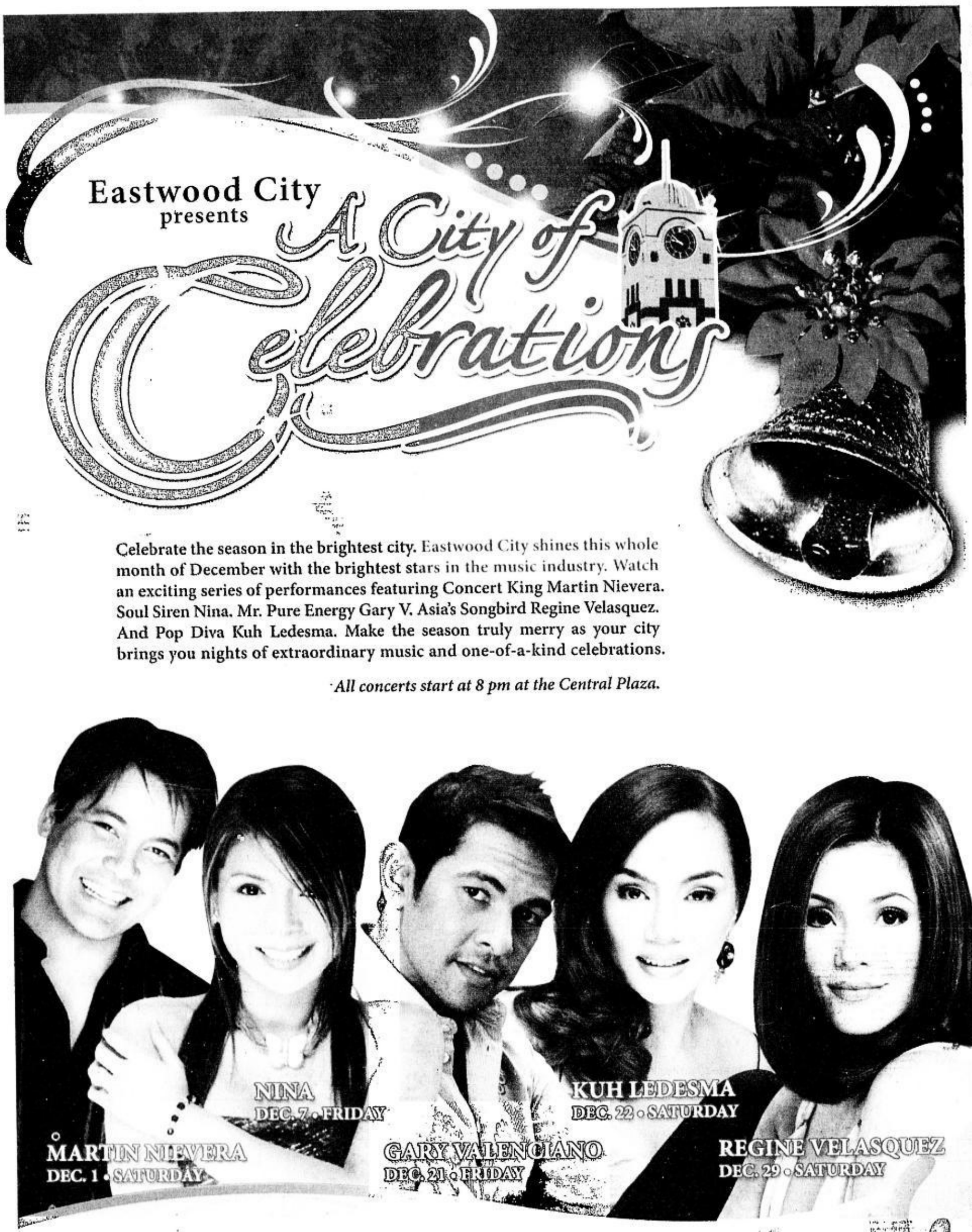
ERIC Santos has come up with his first Christmas album, titled "All I Want This Christmas." Its nine inspiring songs include "Ngayong Pasko," "I Dream of Christmas," "The First Noel," "Tag-ulan sa Pasko," and "Christmas Is."

At Starmalls

ON Dec. 15 at Starmall Las Piñas, participants in the Perfect Rhythm Christmas Recital perform Christmas songs with a different twist. Also, let's all "Meet and Greet Santa Claus" at Finds Supermarket.

At Metropolis Star Alabang on Dec. 16 and 23, have a tuneful time with the Las Piñas Boys Choir, the Himig Muntinlupa Choir—and Santa Claus!

At Starmall Edsa, *Simbang Gabi* starts on Dec. 15 at 7 p.m. at the Activity Area, and culminates on Dec. 23.



WORLD / A27

1st regular train service links North and South Korea

ACROSS / A17

Draft of final MILF peace pact prepared

NEWS / A2

Senate passes P1.2-T 2008 budget in 2 weeks

IMF upgrades RP's '07, '08 growth forecast

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND yesterday upgraded its economic growth outlook for the Philippines for this year and the next but underscored the need to boost tax collection and enhance the country's investment climate to sustain a higher growth path over the medium term.

"This has been a strong year for the Philippines," Il Houng Lee, the head of the IMF mission, told reporters at the end of its two-week annual country review.

In the first three quarters of this year,

IMF UPGRADES/ A20

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Wednesday, December 12, 2007 ★★ 10 sections / Vol. 23 / No. 4 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

EDWIN BACASMAS

ALL IN A DAY'S WORK: President Arroyo telecasts live from the Palace shortly after arriving from an 11-day swing through Europe and Kuwait early Tuesday morning before going on with her usual schedule-packed day.

GMA most corrupt President, says poll

She's worse than Marcos –Pulse Asia

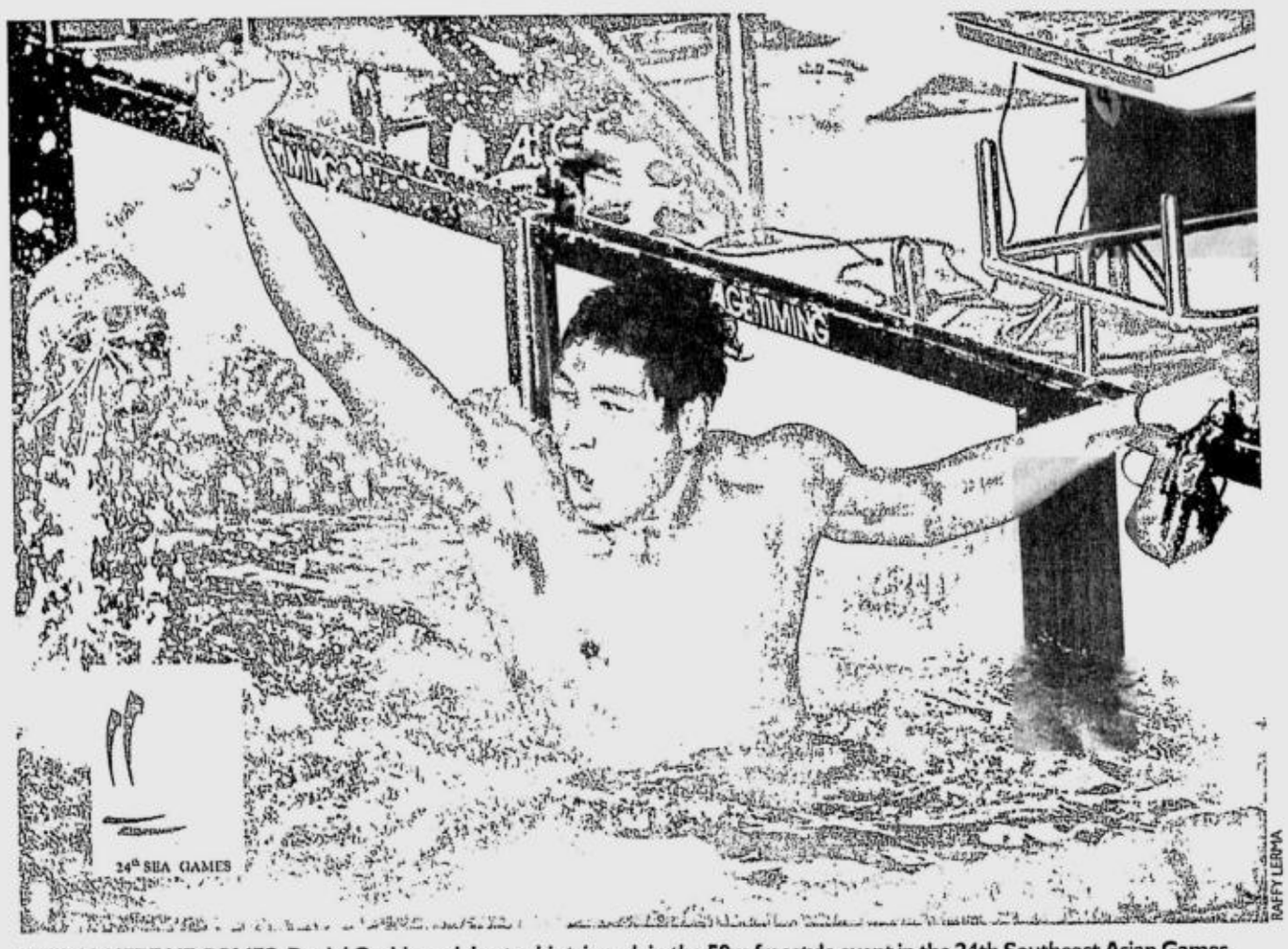
AMONG THE FIVE ADMINISTRATIONS the country has had since 1965, President Macapagal-Arroyo's is plagued by the "most intense" corruption allegations, said about half of Filipinos (45 percent) polled by Pulse Asia Inc. in October.

Forty-two percent of the respondents consider Ms Arroyo the "most corrupt President in Philippine history."

The survey also found that more than 60 percent view Corazon Aquino as the least corrupt Philippine president.

The Pulse Asia survey showed that more Filipinos view Ms Arroyo and her administration as the "most corrupt" compared with former Presidents Joseph Estrada, Fidel Ramos, Aquino and Ferdinand Marcos and

GMA MOST/ A21



RAFFY LERMA

BEIJING HERE HE COMES. Daniel Coakley celebrates his triumph in the 50m freestyle event in the 24th Southeast Asian Games. Coakley, great grandson of Filipino swimming great Teofilo Yldefonso, reset the SEAG record by finishing in 22.80 seconds. In the process, he booked a ticket to Beijing for breaching the Olympic qualifying mark of 23.13 seconds. *(More stories on Pages A29-34.)*

Filipinos 'upbeat' on '08–survey

FOUR OF EVERY FIVE FILIPINOS ARE "upbeat" about the coming year despite the problems hounding the country, according to the latest survey by Pulse Asia Inc.

Only one of every four, however, said the coming Christmas would not be any different from the previous one.

Eighty-four percent are looking forward to 2008 "with hope"—a sentiment shared by majorities across all geographic areas and socioeconomic groups.

While this figure is not much different from last year's 85 percent, it is much higher than the 70 percent in 2005, Pulse Asia said.

The survey was conducted from Oct. 20 to 31 amid the controversy over the

FILIPINOS/ A21

Gore tells world: Time to stop war on Earth itself

OSLO, NORWAY—ACCEPTING THE Nobel Peace Prize, former US Vice President Al Gore on Monday called on humanity to mobilize at once against the dangers of a changing climate.

"Without realizing it, we have begun to wage war on the Earth itself," Gore said in his acceptance speech. "Now, we and the Earth's climate are locked in a relationship familiar to war planners: Mutually assured destruction. It is time to make peace with the planet."

Gore was awarded the prize for sounding the alarm over global

GORE TELLS/ A23

Palace junked P100-M pork for Trillanes

By Christine O. Avendaño and Dona Pazzibugan

SEN. ANTONIO TRILLANES IV ATTempted to stage a revolt at the Peninsula Manila on Nov. 29 because the Department of Budget and Management did not release P100 million of his pork barrel, Malacañang said yesterday.

Presidential Legal Counsel Sergio Apostol said the DBM decision not to release the funds "could be one of the causes which caused (Trillanes) to stage a rebellion at the Manila Pen."

But Reynaldo Robles, Trillanes'

PALACE/ A22

Trillanes says sorry to judge but not to GMA

By DJ Yap and Nikko Dizon

LOOKING SOMBER BUT DEFIANT, Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV and the soldiers accused in a 2003 mutiny yesterday apologized to a judge for walking out of their trial last month but did not say they were sorry to President Arroyo and for mounting a short-lived attempt to ignite a people power revolt.

No act of contrition for his call on President Macapagal-Arroyo to resign during the Peninsula Manila hotel standoff Nov. 29 was uttered by the former Navy lieutenant who won a Senate seat campaigning from his jail cell in the May elections.

"The action taken by the accused was prompted by and was intended to call the public's attention to the massive anomalies and persistent incidence of graft and corruption," Trillanes and the other accused said in a written manifes-

TRILLANES/ A22

NINO JESUS ORBETA

NEVER SO MANY FOR SO FEW: More than a thousand soldiers and cops secure the court inside out when Sen. Antonio Trillanes and company who took over the Manila Pen on Nov. 29 return for the first time to the "scene of the crime" on Tuesday at Makati City Hall for the resumption of the 2003 Oakwood mutiny trial.

Transco bidding on today; judge dismisses TRO

By Doris C. Dumlao, Abigail L. Ho and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE MAKATI REGIONAL TRIAL COURT has junked a petition for a temporary restraining order (TRO) on the privatization of one of the government's largest assets, paving the way for the bidding out today for the multibillion-peso National Transmission Corp. (Transco).

In a decision handed down on Monday, Judge J. Cedrick Ruiz said the pe-

TRANSCO/ A10

Erap ready to make up with GMA but will fight Cha-cha

By Kristine L. Alave

JOSEPH ESTRADA IS ON FORgiveness mode.

The ousted President and pardoned plunderer yesterday said he was open to reconciliation with his political enemies, particularly his successor, President Macapagal-Arroyo, and his former gambling buddy, ex-Ilocos

ERAP/ A10

Power, water rates soar; P1 'pan de sal' is history

By Ronnel W. Domingo, Abigail L. Ho and Amy R. Remo

BRACE YOURSELVES.

This month alone, the price of *pan de sal* will increase to P2.50 and Manila Electric Co. will hike power charges by 6 centavos per kilowatt hour. Following closely is Manila Water Co. Inc. which will raise its water rates beginning Jan. 1, 2008.

The P1 pan de sal is history, according to three groups of bakers.

The price of pan de sal would increase this month to P2.50 each amid the continued increase in the cost of wheat, flour and other inputs.

Also, the price of a loaf of bread would go up starting next week by 5 percent, up to P45 for independent or neighborhood bakeries and P52 for the big players.

The three groups are the Philippine Federation of Bakers Association Inc. (PFBAI) and the Filipino-Chinese Bakers Association Inc. (FCBAI)—representing the small players—and the Philippine Baking Industry Group, which includes Gardenia Bakeries, Julie's Bakeshop, Creative Bakers, French Baker and other established brands.

In a joint media briefing, association officials said bakeries had been suffering the past six months due to the up-

POWER/ A10

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2007

Text us your feedback: inquirer news name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Second FRONTPAGE

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Website: www.inquirer.net/nation

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: The Eastern sections of Northern and Central Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers while Mindanao will have cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Mostly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Mostly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Mostly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY: SCHATZI QUODALA, PDI RESEARCH/12/11/07 SOURCE: PAGASA

EZ2 SIX DIGIT

31 14 | 0 6 2 1 5 9

(In exact order)

Mid-Day SUERTRES Evening

6 3 5 | 1 3 2

6/42 LUZON/VIS-MIN

8 16 22 24 34 41

₱4,749,670.80

WHAT'S INSIDE

AT LONG LAST, Gonzalez may get confirmation /A4

METROBANK told to pay P3.8B in taxes /A8

Senate passes P1.2-T '08 budget in 2 weeks

With 2 amendments, 14-0 vote, spending bill sails through

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

THE SENATE IN RECORD TIME approved last night its version of the P1.227-trillion national budget for 2008 after two weeks of marathon deliberations.

With a vote of 14-0 and no abstentions, the Senate passed the budget bill on third and final reading after making two major amendments on debt interest payments and Malacañang's new antipoverty program, Kilos Asenso.

The Senate plans to go quickly into bicameral conference committee meetings with the House of Representatives to reconcile their respective versions of the budget bill, hoping to have the final version ready for President Macapagal-Arroyo's signature before the end of the year.

The House and Senate are set to go on Christmas break on Dec. 21.

Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, chair of the Senate finance committee, accepted the amendments introduced by Senators Panfilo Lacson and Benigno Aquino III last night, paving the way for the bill's approval on second reading.

The chamber immediately went on to pass the measure on third reading. The bill had been certified urgent by Malacañang.

Slash in debt service

Lacson had urged Enrile to consider making a further slash in Malacañang's proposed P295.7-billion allocation for debt interest payments, and to realign the funds to health services.

In its version of the budget bill, the House cut P17.8 billion from the P295.7-billion allocated to debt interest payments and realigned the funds to social services, including a P4.7 billion increase in the Department of Health's outlay.

Enrile had originally restored P12.1 billion to debt interest payments, and cut only P5.7 billion based on estimated savings from the expected stronger peso exchange rate against the dollar next year.

But yesterday Enrile agreed to insert a special provision in the budget bill that would allow a further reduction in debt interest payment allocations subject to a stronger peso exchange rate, with the freed funds automatically realigned to social services.

P500M realigned

Aquino, meanwhile, moved to slash P500 million from the P3 billion allocated to Malacañang's Kilos Asenso program, and to realign the P500 million to the budgets of the education and health departments.

Enrile readily agreed to the cut in Kilos Asenso's outlay.

Senate President Manuel Villar congratulated Enrile for steering the national budget through the chamber so quickly.

The Senate held whole-day sessions the past two weeks to debate the budgets of each government agency.

In the Senate version of the national budget, the Department of Education received an outlay of P138 billion, public works and highways P90.72 billion, national defense P50.9 billion, agriculture P26.8 billion, transportation and communication P19 billion, health P16.5 billion and foreign affairs P10.18 billion. The judiciary received P10.6 billion.

On Monday, the Senate restored a special provision inserted by the House of Representatives that would suspend interest payments on fraudulent loans.

The special provision states: "No amount shall be used for the payment of interest payments on debts which are challenged as fraudulent, wasteful and/or useless...pending renegotiation and/or condonation."

This could free up funds intended for debt servicing to other government programs, according to the debt watchdog group Freedom from Debt Coalition.

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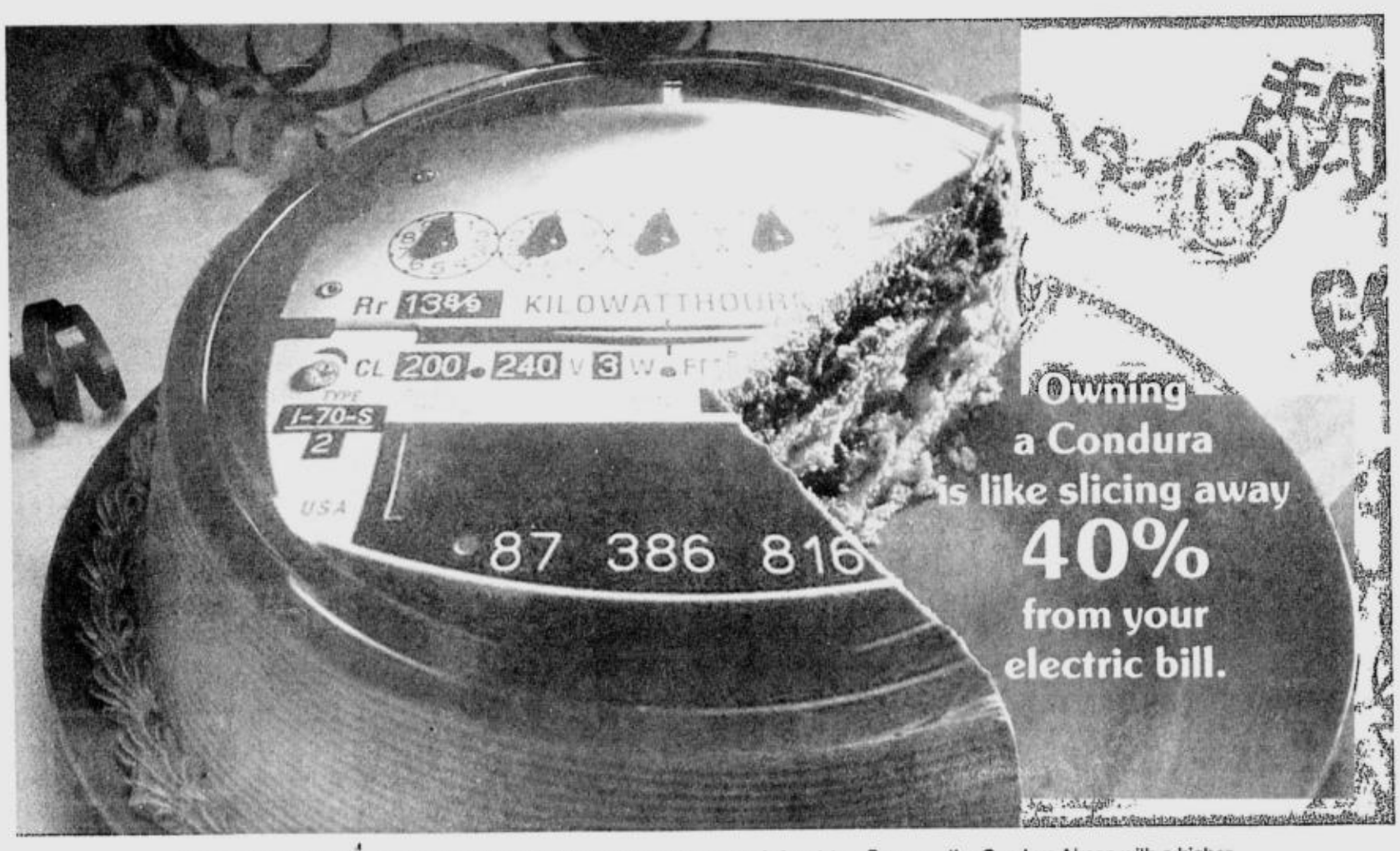

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Cebu solon raps 2 colleagues on cheaper meds bill

By Christian V. Esguerra

CEBU REP. PABLO GARCIA HAS scolded two congressional colleagues for allegedly alluding to him as the one blocking the passage of the Cheaper Medicines Bill.

Garcia took to the floor late Monday to denounce Iloilo Rep. Ferjenel Biron, the measure's principal author, and Palawan Rep. Antonio Alvarez, chair of the committee that consolidated 23 bills seeking to lower the prices of medicines in the country.

"They're trying to picture me as against the bill and the people. But I would rather be right than popular—right by my conscience, right by the Constitution," Garcia said.

The INQUIRER reported last weekend how Biron and Alvarez spoke of their growing suspicion of a colleague's conduct on the passage of the Cheaper Medicines Bill, or HB 2844. Biron said he could not "read" the actions of the unnamed colleague.

Passage of cheaper bill

Neither lawmaker identified the colleague, but Garcia said they must have been referring to him.

"I challenge them to name that congressman. If they are sure of the strength of their bill, they should not be afraid to rock the boat," he said.

"It's not my fault if they cannot understand my questions," he said.

Garcia apparently drew suspicions because of the concerns about the bill that he had been raising for more than a week. At one point, he engaged Alvarez's committee on trade and industry in a debate for more than an hour.

"This bill is very popular with our people and I am now being portrayed or pictured as against the passage of this bill," he said.

"[But] even after this bill is passed, nothing will happen for two or three years," Garcia said.

HB 2844 is an amalgam of strategies seeking to provide consumer access to cheaper medicines, noting that medicines in the Philippines were the second most expensive in Asia.

One such approach is the amendment of the Intellectual Property Code to allow the parallel importation of patented drugs. Critics point out that the importation should also embrace off-patent drugs since patented ones made up only less than 10 percent of the local pharmaceutical market.

In his privilege speech, Garcia said existing provisions of the IPC would have been enough to allow the exploitation of patents of key drugs so long as public interest required it.

He said government agencies were authorized to make such a judgment call without the President having to declare national emergency, a provision that Alvarez's committee added to HB 2844.

Provisions of IPC

"The provisions of the present Intellectual Property Code would have sufficed, but then the committee added conditions which would favor the multinational patent holders. Was it not proper for me to object?" Garcia said.

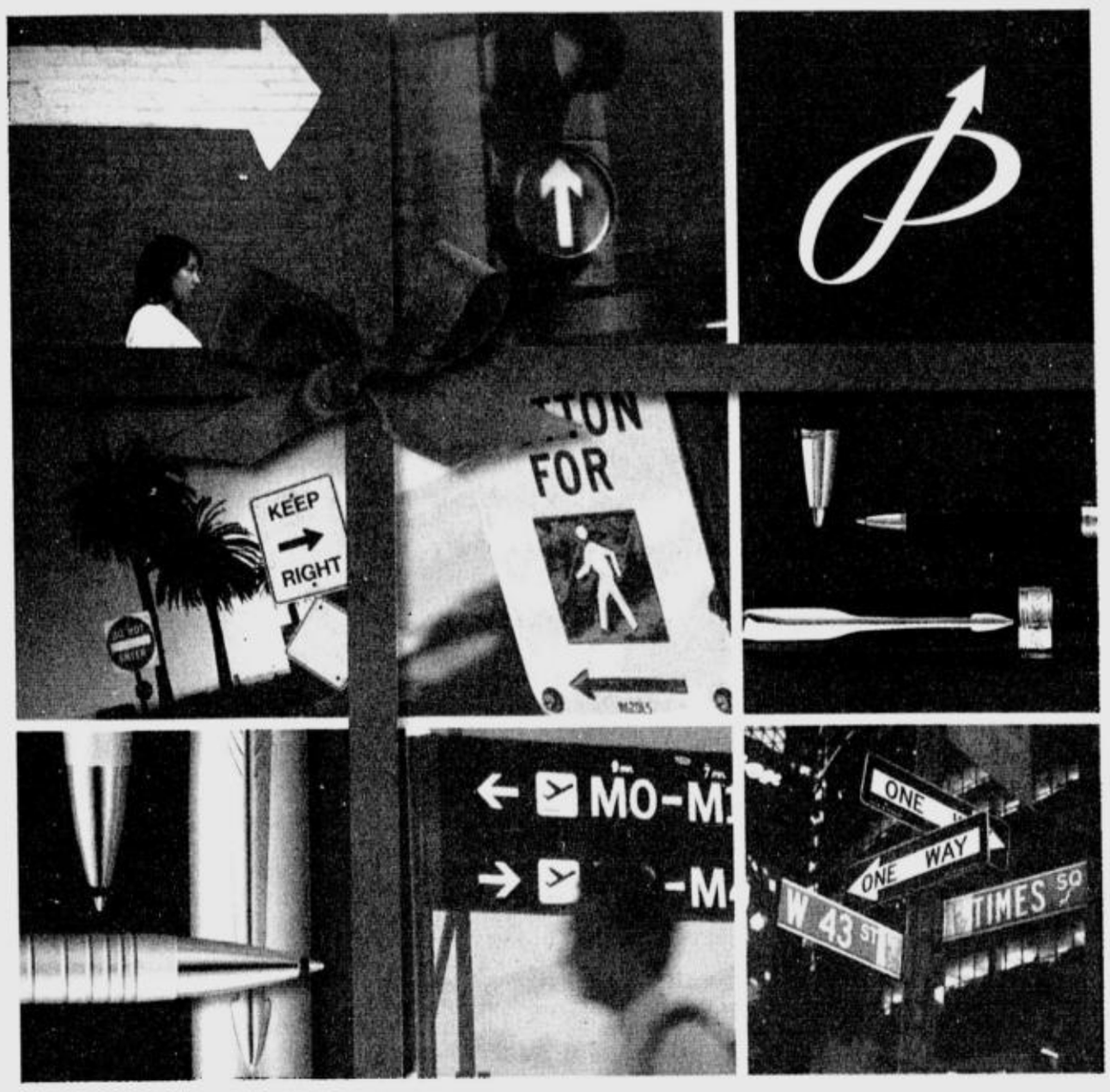
Garcia also described as an "affront to national dignity and sovereignty" the inclusion of a provision in the IPC containing the Philippines' compliance with the Doha Declaration on the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement.

The agreement's so-called "flexibilities" allow poorer countries to determine when to relax patents on important drugs for the benefit of public health. Through "parallel importation," countries can import off-patent medicines sold at much cheaper prices in other parts of the world.

Garcia said the bill was "a self-inflicted denigration of the dignity of Congress and its powers."

"Why should this Congress be subjected to comply with an international agreement? Why do we have to do it?" he said.

Until such issues are addressed, Garcia said HB 2844 will only give the public "false hopes" that the measure would make medicines affordable and available.



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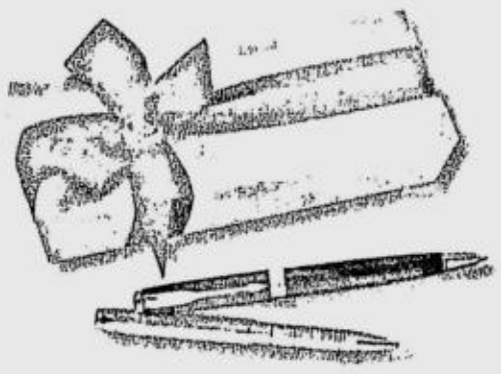

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Smuggled onions seized

By Margaux Ortiz

THE SMUGGLED onions just keep coming in.

The Bureau of Customs (BOC) has seized 17 containers of smuggled onions that arrived on board five different vessels at the Manila International Container Port (MICP) from China in October and November.

Customs officials led by Commissioner Napoleon Morales yesterday inspected the 40-foot vans containing smuggled onions with an estimated worth of P25 million.

The onions were all consigned to Silver Rance Trading which declared them as apples, Morales said.

Customs Intelligence and Investigation Service officers recommended the cargo for X-ray scanning after receiving information that a big shipment of onions would be passed off as apples, a common agricultural product imported for the Christmas season.

SC junks petition to declare water firms as public utilities

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE SUPREME COURT HAS DISMISSED A suit filed by nongovernment groups and lawmakers seeking to declare water concessionaires Maynilad Water Services Inc. and Manila Water Company Inc. as public utilities in order to prevent water price increases.

The petitioners wanted the high court to nullify two resolutions of the the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System and its regulatory office declaring that the concessionaires were not public utilities.

In dismissing the suit, the high court said the petitioners failed to follow the proper procedures and raised questions of fact that the tribunal could not tackle.

It said the petitioners also failed to cite the constitutional provision that the MWSS resolutions supposedly violated.

The suit was filed by the Freedom from Debt Coalition, the Akbayan Citizens' Action Party, the Alliance of Progressive Labor, representatives Renato Magtubo, Joel Villanueva, Eduardo Zialcita, Mario Aguja and Risa Hontiveros-Baraquel, Ma. Theresa Diokno-Pascual, Mary Ann Manahan and Patrocinio Jude Esguerra III.

Named respondents were the MWSS and the MWSS Regulatory Office.

The petitioners asked the high court to declare Maynilad and Manila Water as public utilities and not just mere concessionaires because of the nature of the service they provide.

They said that if the two concessionaires are not declared public utilities, they would be excluded from the 12 percent limitation on their rate of return and exempted from the refund of excess collections that the Supreme Court had ordered the Manila Electric Co., the electricity distributor, to do.

This would then lead to an increase in water rates, said the petitioners who also sought a temporary restraining order against the MWSS resolutions.

The petitioners argued that Maynilad and Manila Water should be considered public utilities since the Public Service Act states that "public service" refers to persons that control, manage or operate, among others, water supply and a sewerage system.

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At long last, Gonzalez may get confirmation

By Norman Bordadora

FINALLY, AFTER THREE YEARS and a kidney transplant, staunch defender of the President Raul Gonzalez may be confirmed as secretary of justice before Christmas, Davao City Rep. Prospero Nograles said yesterday.

"My basis is the public statement of (Sen. Panfilo) Lacson, who said he won't object anymore to the justice secretary," said Nograles, head of the House of Representatives contingent to the Commission on Appointments. Lacson is a member of the Senate panel in the CA.

"Secondly, he [Gonzalez] just got a new lease on life after a life-threatening transplant," Nograles said.

If Gonzalez is confirmed, it would be after three years of repeatedly being bypassed by the influential bicameral commission which screens presidential appointments.

Despite being ill prior to his operation, Gonzalez remained loyal to President Macapagal-Arroyo and fiercely defended her from her critics.

Nograles appealed to his colleagues in the commission to go easy on Gonzalez this time.

"I would like to appeal to our members to be compassionate and humane and to confirm him as soon as possible," he said.

Nograles said Lacson, a staunch Gonzalez critic, was inclined to support his confirmation "out of respect for [Gonzalez's] zeal to return to work after undergoing a kidney transplant in September."

GONZALEZ

"I expect some Cabinet secretaries will be confirmed before the Christmas break," Nograles added.

Those expected to get the CA's nod, he said, are former congressmen Gilbert Teodoro as defense secretary and Rolando Andaya as budget secretary, Esperanza Cabral at social welfare and Peter Favila at trade and industry.

Asked if Favila's role as a signatory to the $329-million National Broadband Network (NBN) contract with China's ZTE Corp. that was attended by controversy and shelved by President Arroyo would affect his confirmation chances, Nograles said: "That's a dead issue by this time. Let the Supreme Court and the Ombudsman decide that ZTE issue."

"The others who may be controversial will be bypassed this year and we will tackle them next year when Congress opens, if they are reappointed by the President," Nograles said.

Among those who failed to make Nograles' list of probable successful appointees was Margarito Teves as finance secretary. Teves also figured in the ZTE controversy when his department reviewed the deal.

The NBN deal was clouded by allegations of bribery against former Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. and of the involvement of the President's husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo.

Earlier this year, Teves' father, former Negros Oriental Rep. Heminio Teves, accused some members of the House in the CA at the time of asking for money in exchange for his son's confirmation.

Then Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay, the leader of the House CA contingent in the previous Congress, denied any attempt at extortion.

"That allegation has not been proven at all. Fact is, it was denied in print and broadcast. It belongs to the attic of forgotten memories as far as this new CA is concerned," Nograles said.

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Corrections

IN THE DEC. 6 ISSUE, a front-page article—"Opposition solon urges Transco probe in House"—contained the erroneous sentence: "According to [Bukidnon Rep. Teofisto Guingona III], La Costa is one of the biggest power firms in North America." Guingona made no such statement. La Costa Development Inc., which is registered in the Philippines, is not a big power firm in North America—its partner SNC Lavalin is.

* * *

IN THE DEC. 7 ISSUE, an Across the Nation article on Page A17—"Bishop's wish for gov: Birth of new Pampanga"—erroneously described Pampanga Gov. Eddie Panlilio as a Catholic priest on leave. When Panlilio filed his candidacy, he remained a priest but he was suspended from performing priestly duties.

* * *

IN THE DEC. 9 ISSUE, an article on Page A4—"Let's talk again, cops tell media"—misstated the surname of the secretary of the interior and local government. The interior secretary is Ronaldo Puno—not Zamora. Ronaldo Zamora is the congressional representative of San Juan City.

The Daily Gospel

Wednesday, December 12, 2007
Our Lady of Guadalupe

1st Reading: Zec 2:14-17
Gospel: Luke 1:26-38

The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth. He was sent to a young virgin who was betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the family of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

The angel came to her and said, "Rejoice, full of grace, the Lord is with you." Mary was troubled at these words, wondering what this greeting could mean.

But the angel said, "Do not fear, Mary, for God has looked kindly on you. You shall conceive and bear a son and you shall call him Jesus. He will be great and shall rightly be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the kingdom of David, his ancestor; he will rule over the people of Jacob forever and his reign shall have no end."

Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be if I am a virgin?" And the angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore, the holy child to be born shall be called Son of God. Even your relative Elizabeth is expecting a son in her old age, although she was unable to have a child, and she is now in her sixth month. With God nothing is impossible."

Then Mary said, "I am the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done to me as you have said." And the angel left her.

Commentary

The readings are of wisdom, whom God made first and who is close beside him always, bringing God delight, playing in the world, and bringing delight to humans. An apt description of the woman of Guadalupe, who brought the child who is Wisdom to the world, accompanied by the sound of music, flowers, light, and joy. She is the patroness of the Americas, the one who sought to bring together the victims and the conqueror by standing with the victims and calling them to rejoice for she is their mother first. She brings God's presence and dwelling place to the indigenous peoples. The incarnation, the birth of Jesus, brings true justice to all peoples, in spite of believers' destruction and evil. God seeks to make his dwelling place with all peoples—not just the ones his followers choose as worthy.

The 'annunciation' is really the Incarnation—God becomes flesh in the womb of Mary at her submission and word of acceptance, just as God's word becomes part of our flesh at our baptisms and upon our acceptance of the Word of God. And the 'visitation' is really Mary's confirmation by Elizabeth—the exchange of the Spirit between believers that culminates in the shout of joy in praise of God for liberation and freedom given to the lowly (those without violence), the poor, the hungry, and those without power on earth. This is Guadalupe's message to the oppressed. If we call ourselves children of Nuestra Señora La Virgen de Guadalupe, is this also our message?

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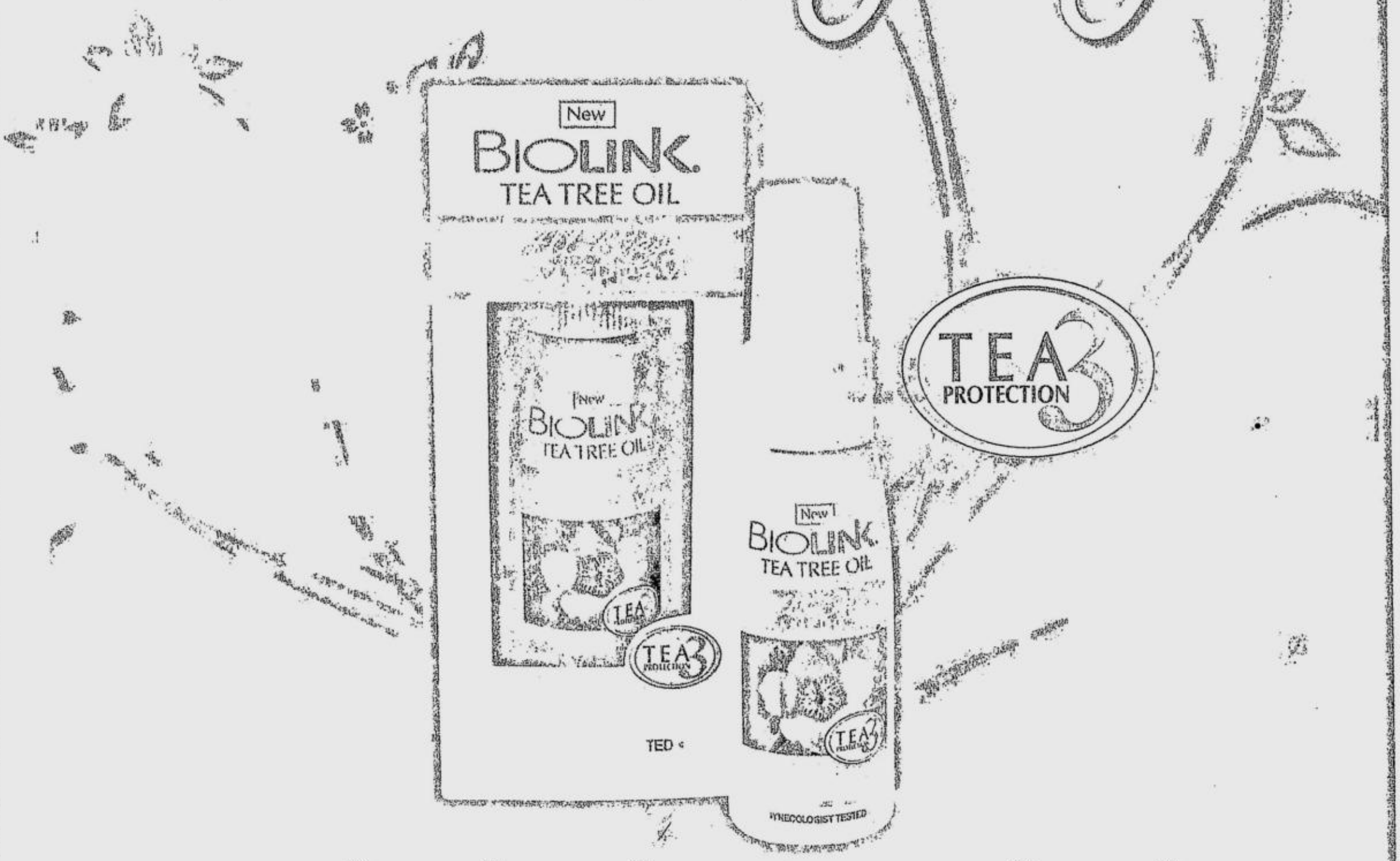

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Sumilao farmers hit DAR inaction

By TJ Burgonio

HIGAONON FARMERS YESterday scored the Department of Agrarian Reform's inaction on their bid to stop the development of a former corn plantation in Bukidnon into a hog farm before it rules on their fresh claim to the land.

The farmers said any further delay in the issuance of a cease and desist order on the construction of a hog farm in the 144-ha estate in Barangay San Vicente, Sumilao town could render their plea moot.

"They should now issue a cease and desist order," Napoleon Merida Jr., president of the San Vicente Landless Farmers Association, said in an interview inside their tent outside the DAR building.

The 55 farmers, who walked 1,700 km for nearly two months from Sumilao to Manila, are asking DAR to stop the construction, revoke the conversion order, issue a notice of coverage and install them in the estate.

"We've walked this far, and the issue still hangs in the air," Merida lamented.

Agrarian reform advocate Christian Monsod supports the farmers' demand for the immediate issuance of a CDO while Agrarian Secretary Nasser Pangandaman reviews the merits of the case.

He stressed it was just and fair for DAR to issue a provisional relief, in the form of the CDO, while studying the case, otherwise it could become moot.

"The fair way to do it is for DAR to tell San Miguel, while we're studying the merits, they should stop development first," Marlon Manuel, the counsel for the farmers' group Task Force Mapalad said in an interview.

"We're very apprehensive about the delay. Are they waiting for the issue to become academic, or more complicated, so that the farmers will not get their due? The law and equity are on the side of farmers, why does it take so long for them to make a decision?"

The farmers submitted their position paper to the DAR Monday night on Pangandaman's instruction.

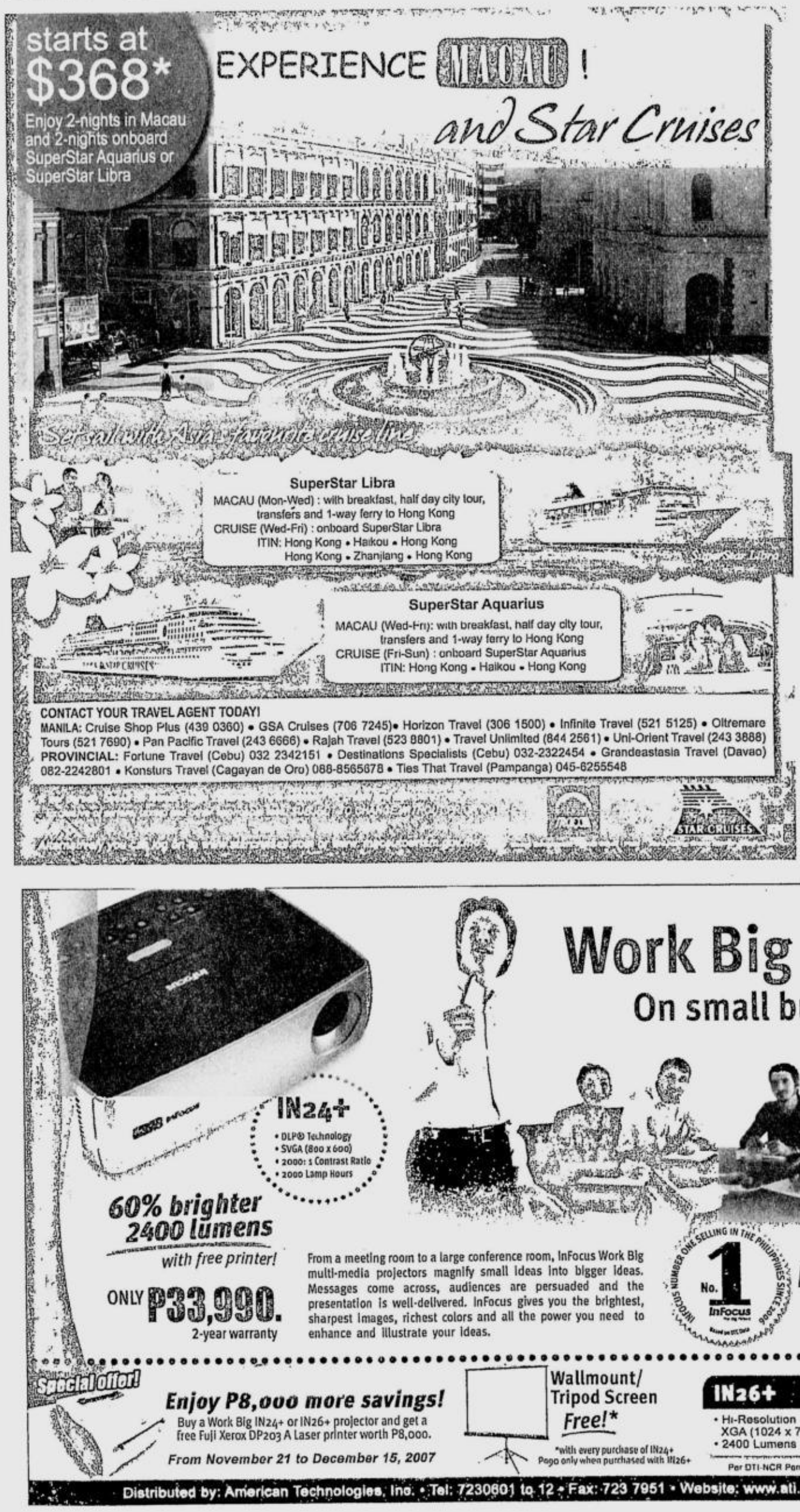
"They're still studying the case; we don't know how long they will take to decide the case," Manuel said.

The INQUIRER tried but failed to get any comment from Pangandaman.

The farmers argued that the estate should revert to them under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program since the new owner, San Miguel Foods Inc., did not develop the land five years after it was converted into an agro-industrial estate.

The construction of the hog farm was not mentioned in the conversion order, which called for the construction of an agro-industrial park, cultural and livelihood centers, sports complex, hotel and restaurant, among others, they said.

DAR awarded the land to 137 farmers in 1995. But this was reversed by Malacañang on the appeal of landowner Norberto Quisumbing and approved its conversion into an agro-industrial estate in 1996, an act affirmed by the Supreme Court in 1999.



HS aptitude test eyed as requisite for college

By Jerry E. Esplanada

THE NATIONAL CAREER ASSESSMENT Examination, or NCAE, will very likely be made a prerequisite for entering college by 2009, according to Education Secretary Jesli A. Lapus.

"It will be made possible with the passage of an enabling law. We have discussed the issue with leaders of both houses of Congress and they all agree with the need for this," said Lapus.

But for now, the NCAE results remain recommendatory, said Nelia Benito, director of the National Education Testing and Research Center (NETRC).

Unlike the defunct National College Entrance Examination (NCEE), which was used as a basis for college admission and discontinued in 1994, NCAE results are "being used primarily for career guidance," said Benito.

The DepEd has spent more than P50 million for the NCAE which aims to "assess the abilities of students in areas essential for post-secondary careers and provide students information that will help them make wise career decisions," Lapus said.

Aside from testing students' general scholastic abilities, the NCAE also measures their aptitude in other areas, like occupational interest, and technical-vocational and entrepreneurial skills.

The NCAE, now on its second year, is also administered to out-of-school youth planning to apply for scholarship programs of the Commission on Higher Education, or CHed.

A total of 1,223,465 senior high school students from more than 13,000 public and private high schools nationwide took this year's NCAE, conducted last August by the NETRC.

Special examinations were held last month for those who failed to take the Aug. 28 test.

The DepEd has started releasing the examinees' rating certificates which will give students "an accurate measure of their potential for college, technical or vocational school or entrepreneurship," said Lapus.

He said 21 high school seniors scored 99 plus percent in this year's NCAE, qualifying them to join the DepEd's elite "Club 99+."

"At least 13 of them came from public high schools," noted Lapus.

Last year, only five examinees made it to the club.

The new Club 99+ members are Karl Jeffrey Murillo of La Union; Ralph Francis Birung, Isabela; Mark Joseph Tiongson and Axel Philip Advento, Bulacan; Meawyn Millan, Negros Occidental; William Yasi and Francino Delima, Cebu City; Mary Lorainne Fernandez, Benguet; Lea Angelica Alhambra, Baguio City; Armin Tajanlangit, Quezon City; John Lorenzo Bautista, Mandaluyong; Lara Alessandra Aragones, Marie Therese Floro and Katrina Villanueva, Pasig; Jewel Len Sabaupan, Naga, Camarines Sur; Caryl Gerarcas, Calbayog, Western Samar; Lee Robert Legaspi, South Cotabato; Sharla Raye Billena, Gen. Santos City; Luis Anthony Mariano, Quezon; Rose Ann Magnaye, Batangas; and Efren John Misagal, Leyte.

Dapitan gets ready for Jalosjos return

By Richel Umel
Inquirer Mindanao

ILIGAN CITY—THE people of Dapitan City are preparing a grand welcome for former Zamboanga del Norte congressman Romeo Jalosjos, according to a town official.

Jalosjos, a convicted rapist serving time at the New Bilibid Prisons, was reportedly among those pardoned by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Malacañang had issued a denial about the report saying the convict was not among those considered for pardon.

Dapitan City councilor Apple Marie Agolong said they were not discouraged by the Malacañang clarification.

"We have no idea and [no] confirmation on the latest update on former congressman Jalosjos' absolute pardon this December, but we do not have control over the Dapitanons' will and plans to celebrate," Agolong told the INQUIRER by phone.

She said the former congressman could be home before Christmas.

"Dapitanons who love him are preparing for a grand homecoming [which could take place] before Christmas," Agolong said.

She added that it would be more elaborate than a fiesta ce' bration for the long-lost son of Dapitan City.

Fluid situation

When asked to comment on the town's preparations for his arrival, Jalosjos sent this text message to the INQUIRER: "My situation is still fluid."

Sources said the planned homecoming was different from the upcoming Handuraw festival.

The Handuraw (reminiscing) festival, which is now on its second year, was created mainly to commemorate the life and works of Dr. Jose Rizal during his exile in Dapitan City from July 17, 1892 to July 31, 1896.

Agolong said this year's Handuraw would feature, among others, the launching of a book on Rizal's correspondence with Ferdinand Blumentritt.

Jalosjos authored the book, she said.

Animal rights groups, DOT to meet on sea park

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE DEPARTMENT of Tourism (DOT) is set to meet with members of animal rights group People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (Peta) to "better understand" the group's objection to the Manila Ocean Park, a massive marine aquarium behind the Quirino Grandstand in Manila which opened this month.

"The regulation of environmental practices of enterprises such as the Manila Ocean Park actually fall under the jurisdiction and expertise of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)," Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace Durano said yesterday.

However, Durano said a meeting with Peta could shed light on why they vehemently object to the oceanarium, a P1-billion project of the Philippine Tourism Authority (PTA) with Singaporean and Malaysian investors.

"I admire their passion for marine protection and preservation," Durano said of the animal rights group.

He stressed that the DOT had been working with environmental groups such as the Visayas Sea Squadron in the Visayan Seas, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Philippines and the Bantay Kalikasan in Donsol, Sorsogon.

"We likewise practice the cause they are advocating. What's important at this point is to determine whether the oceanarium violated any environmental laws in the manner in which they sourced their marine species," Durano said.

The DOT secretary added that he would likewise investigate if the project has fully complied with the environmental requirements of the DENR.

In a letter to Durano, Peta-Asia campaigns manager Rochelle Regodon said marine parks would only teach people that "it is acceptable to keep animals in captivity—bored, restricted, lonely and far from their natural homes."

Peta also urged the public to boycott the aquarium to show their objection to keeping animals in captivity.

Manila Ocean Park vice president Cristina Romualdez had earlier clarified that the facility would promote the conservation and preservation of marine species, adding that they have been working closely with government agencies such as the DENR and the Department of Education (DepEd).

Romualdez stressed that the oceanarium will not feature protected and endangered species such as whale sharks and other sea mammals.

She said a team of marine biologists and scientists have been working to make sure the fish species in one tank would live well with each other and in a natural ecosystem.

"We are very careful about the fish display. We are aware that we have a responsibility both to the public and the environment," Romualdez said.

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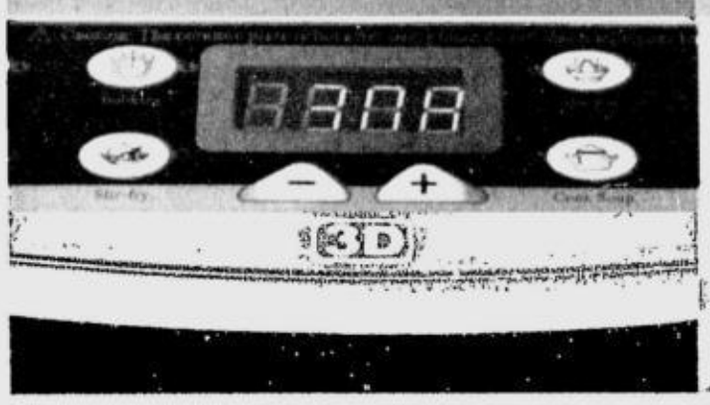

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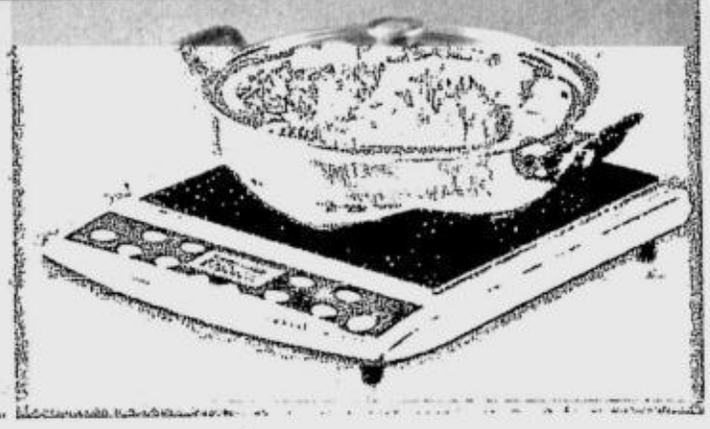


Metrobank told to pay P3.8B in taxes

By Michelle V. Remo

METROPOLITAN BANK AND Trust Co., the country's biggest bank, has been ordered by the Court of Tax Appeals to pay the Bureau of Internal Revenue P3.79 billion in taxes that had accrued since the 1990s.

The liability arose from unpaid documentary stamp taxes and gross receipt taxes on special savings accounts.

Deputy Commissioner Gregorio Cabantac, head of the BIR's legal and inspection division, had earlier stressed the tax-collecting agency's resolve to collect back taxes to meet the government goal of reducing the budget deficit.

The legal battle between the BIR and Metrobank stemmed from the creation of special savings accounts in the '90s.

Metrobank, as did the other banks, offered the accounts to clients seeking higher yields but with the convenience of being able to withdraw their money when they wanted.

Under the National Internal Revenue Code, time deposits, which earn higher interest, are subject to the documentary stamp tax (DST) but not ordinary savings accounts.

Special savings accounts have features of both ordinary and time deposit accounts. This was the reason Metrobank and the other banks gave for not paying the DST.

The BIR is also involved in court cases with other banks over the DST issue, but Metrobank had the biggest tax deficiency, it said.

The BIR said it expects its victory to be challenged by Metrobank.

Metrobank has filed a motion for reconsideration in the Court of Tax Appeals.

Legal remedies

"In any event, we are ready to avail of other legal remedies, including going to the Supreme Court, to finally resolve this industry issue," said Antonio Viray, Metrobank assistant corporate secretary, in a statement.

Metrobank stressed it had complied with its tax obligations.

"Pending resolution of this matter, we would like to assure the public that throughout its 45-year history, Metrobank has not been remiss in its responsibilities to the country, especially with regard to paying taxes," Viray said.

He pointed out that in the last three years, the bank remitted P64.4 billion in national and municipal taxes. Last year alone, the bank paid P24.5 billion in taxes to the government, he said.

Earlier, Metrobank applied for amnesty under the recently enacted Tax Amnesty Law.

Under the law, individuals and companies with unpaid taxes could apply for amnesty between Sept. 6 and March 5 next year. Applicants may pay an amnesty fee that would grant them immunity from prosecution.

But Revenue Commissioner Lilian Hefti said the BIR would not accept amnesty applications from Metrobank and other banks with DST deficiencies but would pursue their tax liabilities.

Wet Christmas seen

By TJ Burgonio

IT COULD BE A WET CHRISTmas this year, with "above normal" rains extending even up to the summer months.

Weathermen said the unusual rainfall forecast till May next year is due to La Niña, a phenomenon characterized by the cooling of the surface of the Pacific Ocean. The increased moisture this produces is carried our way by the easterly winds.

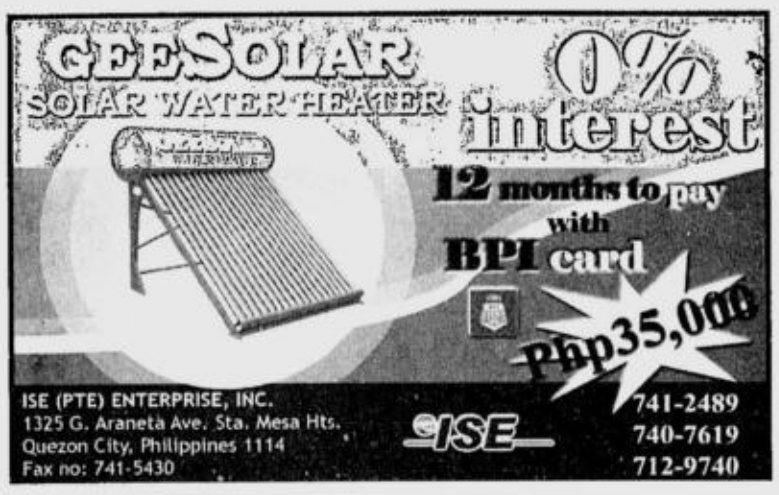
The Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) advised the public to brace for more flash floods, particularly in February as the cold-inducing northeast monsoon (Amihan) converges with the warm, moist air from the easterly Pacific winds.

"In areas where it's normal not to have any rain during summer, it will rain this time," said senior weather specialist Daisy Ortega of the Pagasa Climate Information Monitoring and Prediction Center in an interview.

"It could cause floods and landslides," stressed Ortega, recalling that the mudslide in Guinsaugon, Leyte, that buried a village of 1,800 people was caused by rains brought by a "weak" La Niña.

La Niña this year was described as "moderately strong."

Above normal rain is expected over most parts of the country.



CHRISTMAS PACKAGE

Passage of GMA pet bills seen; amnesty for Reds to miss cut

By Christine O. Avendaño

WITH SIX SESSION DAYS TO go before Congress takes its holiday break, its leaders and Malacañang agreed to work for the passage of nine priority measures like the 2008 national budget and the Cheaper Medicines Act but the proposed amnesty bill for communist rebels may not be passed for lack of time.

This came out of yesterday's Legislative-Executive Advisory Development Council (Ledac) meeting presided over by President Macapagal-Arroyo at which 35 measures were presented for consideration in the group's common legislative agenda.

In her opening statement, the President made known her preference for four measures—the P1.2-trillion national budget, the cheaper medicines bill, amendments to the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (Epira) and amnesty for communist rebels.

Epira amendment

"The budget will finance public services and infrastructure long [sought] by the people and business," Ms Arroyo said.

"We also want the passage before Congress takes its break on Dec. 21 of the cheaper medicines bill that would further bring down the cost of medicine and amendments to the Epira so that electricity costs will also go down.

"We will also talk about the amnesty proclamation for communist rebels. Many of them want to return to the fold of the law, that's why we proclaimed an amnesty for them ... and we need today the approval of Congress on this," Ms Arroyo said.

It looks like the President will get most of her wishes save for the rebel amnesty bill.

Not optimistic

The Ledac members who emerged from the nearly two-hour meeting said the six other measures that would likely be approved were the creation of the Civil Aviation Authority, extension of the Agricultural Competitiveness Enhancement Fund, amendments to the Magna Carta for Small- and Medium-Scale Industries, creation of the Credit Information System, establishment of the Personal Equity Retirement Account and amendments to the University of the Philippines charter.

While they agreed to work on passing the rebel amnesty bill, the lawmakers and Palace officials were not optimistic this would happen before the break.

President Macapagal-Arroyo issued a presidential proclamation granting amnesty to members of the Communist Party of the Philippines, the New People's Army and the National Democratic Front in September. All it needs is the concurrence of the House and Senate.

Earlier, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said approval of the amnesty bill was high on the agenda of the Ledac meeting.

"There is a commitment to work on it but there is a reality check—we only have six session days left," Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Jesus Dureza told reporters.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said some senators had raised concerns about the amnesty bill and he didn't think there would be enough time to approve it.

"The President is really moving for it but the problem [is] once the proclamation is issued, Congress can only express conformity or reject it. It cannot amend it so whatever concerns they [senators] have, it's not like a treaty that they can debate," Gonzalez said.

Unsettled issues

Sen. Edgardo Angara said the amnesty measure may be passed "not later than January next year" because of "outstanding issues to be clarified."

He said the proclamation should explain certain concepts such as what constitutes a political offense, the amnesty's coverage and funding for the social integration of the rebel returnees.

He said implementing rules and regulations were also needed.

Speaker Jose de Venecia said what needed reviewing was the "economic component of each and every" communist rebel availing himself of the amnesty program.

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, however, said the Senate will try to pass the amnesty bill before Christmas.

"We're going to try and pass it before the break because it is urgent that these rebel returnees should, by their in effect defection from the revolutionary cause, strengthen the situation in our country [that would] be reflected in our national economy next year," Santiago said.

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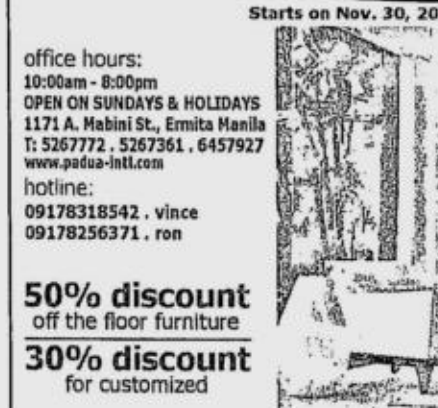

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Court grants Batasan suspect new probe

By Allison W. Lopez

A MANILA REGIONAL Trial Court judge postponed the arraignment of Batasan bombing suspect Hajarun Jamiri yesterday and granted the suspect's request for a preliminary investigation after he claimed police had tortured him into making a confession.

Judge Virgilio Alameda of Manila RTC Branch 10 said the arraignment would be postponed until the issue of probable cause was resolved by the fiscals.

Jamiri, one of nine persons accused of involvement in the Nov. 13 bombing at the House of Representatives, had sought the preliminary investigation, complaining to the judge that aside from being tortured, he was the victim of a warrantless arrest on Nov. 19, and was denied a lawyer of his choice while in police custody.

Out on bail, the 49-year-old ex-mayor of Tuburan, Basilan, also recanted in a press conference on Monday his statements implicating former Basilan Rep. Gerry Salapudin, Anak Mindanao Rep. Mujiv Hataman and the latter's brother Jim in the bombing that killed five persons, including the alleged target, Basilan Rep. Wahab Akbar.

Two of Jamiri's co-accused, Caidar Aunal and Adham Kusain, also claimed they were tortured by police into signing confessions and implicating Salapuddin and the Hataman brothers as the masterminds.

The recantations could spell the collapse of the cases filed by the Philippine National Police against them and adds fire to accusations by government critics that police authorities are human rights abusers as well as incompetent investigators. *With reports from Leila B. Salaverria and Christine O. Avendaño*

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GMA missed best option in 2005, Ramos claims

By Fe Zamora and Dona Pazzibugan

FORMER PRESIDENT FIDEL V. RAMOS said a shift from the presidential to a parliamentary system would have been the "best option" for change, but this option was no longer available now.

The change from presidential to parliamentary in 2005 would have removed President Macapagal-Arroyo and could have spared the country from more "suffering," said Ramos who delivered the keynote speech at the First Southeast Asian Forum on Islam and Democracy at the Manila Hotel late Monday.

"That issue would have long been over," Ramos said in Filipino, referring to the stand-off at the Manila Peninsula Hotel last Nov. 29 instigated by Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV and Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim purportedly to bring about change.

Ramos said he offered the formula for "constitutional renewal" at the height of the "Hello Garci" scandal from June to August 2005, but his proposal was accepted and then set aside.

The airing of excerpts from an illegal wire tap, in which the President was allegedly recorded talking with an election commissioner about widening her lead in the 2004 election results, resulted in the sudden resignation of 10 Cabinet members and senior officials on July 8, 2005.

Ramos and House Speaker Jose de Venecia came to the aid of Ms Arroyo, proposing an exit formula for her through a shift to a parliamentary system by way of constitutional amendments.

"The timeline for constitutional renewal should have been from August to December [2005]. There should have been a constitutional assembly, senatorial elections by districts ... That would have been our best option because in the parliamentary system, you do not have to involve the Armed Forces and the police in effecting regime change as what had happened here so many times in a presidential system," Ramos said. *With reports from Norman Bordadora and Christine Avendaño*

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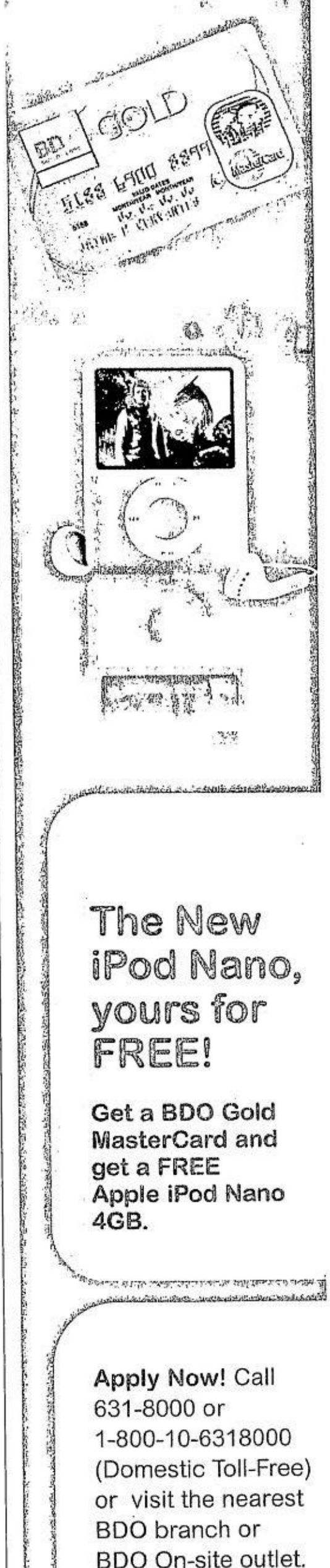

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Power, water rates soar; P1 'pan de sal' is history

From page A1

ward spiraling of prices of wheat and flour.

No choice

Lucito Chavez, president of PFBAI, said bakeries had no choice but to pass on the December flour price increase of 6 percent lest they sustain heavy losses in the holiday season.

"We are no longer capable of tightening our belts any further or else we would have to close our businesses," Chavez said.

Industry data showed that the price of flour had risen steadily by at least 6 percent a month in the last six months. A 25-kilogram bag cost P580 in July but now fetches P840.

Simplicio P. Umali Jr., president of PhilBaking, said that an 11-percent flour price hike in October and 9 percent in November had not been fully reflected in the price of bread.

No relief in sight

Umali said that on top of this month's 6-percent price increase, word was going around that prices would go up again by 10 percent in January.

The industry groups said the global increase in wheat prices due to short supplies was pulling up local prices of flour.

In the United States, which is the country's primary source of wheat, price increases have reached 78 percent with a metric ton now fetching $399 free on board compared to $224 a ton last year.

"Flour prices could have been higher if not for the continued appreciation of the peso against the dollar," Umali said.

He said domestic price hikes were also affecting other flour-based products like noodles, cakes, pastries and snack foods.

According to the PFBAI and FCBAI, most of the independent bakeries have given up on making pan de sal at P1 apiece a few months ago as they were forced to jack up the price to P1.50.

Power rates up, too

Consumers will experience a 6-centavo-per-kilowatt-hour increase in electricity charges this month as Meralco passes on its recovery of purchased power costs from the month before.

From P4.3525 per kWh in November, Meralco's generation charge went up to P4.4125 per kWh this month.

Meralco president and chief operating officer Jesus Francisco explained, however, that the increase in the December generation charge component of electricity bills was not an actual rate increase, but was a result of the automatic generation rate adjustment (Agra) mechanism.

Under the Agra, distribution utilities such as Meralco can automatically adjust generation and system loss charges sans prior approval from the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC).

"Every month, we get power from various generators. Naturally, the costs fluctuate for various reasons, such as fuel price, plant conditions, among others. So the average generation charge will move up or down," Francisco explained.

Rate adjustments

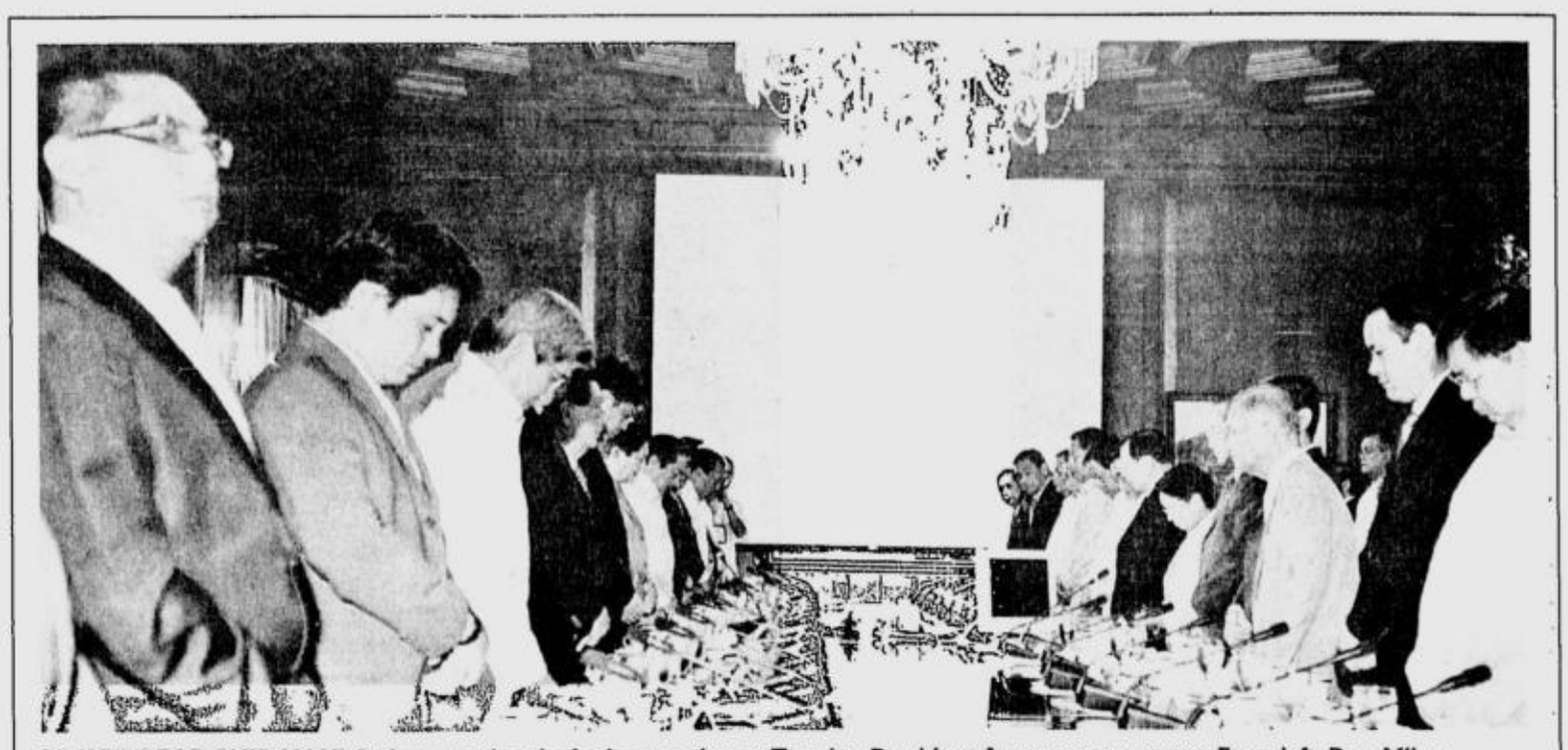
Despite the Agra's automatic nature, however, he said Meralco still had to submit to the ERC the figures that they would use for their generation rate adjustments.

"We do submit these figures monthly to the ERC for them to check or validate. They are also on our website," he said.

What was still pending with the ERC, he said, were 10 petitions covering generation cost recovery from September 2006 to June 2007, the period when the ERC suspended the Agra scheme.

These under-recoveries would be taken as a separate issue within the year, he said.

No recoveries would be made without prior approval from the ERC, at least for these 10 pending petitions, Francisco added. These would not form part of any Agra-related adjustments in the coming months.



PRAYERS FOR GUIDANCE: Before starting the Ledac meeting on Tuesday, President Arroyo says a prayer. From left, Rep. Mikey Arroyo, Senators Miguel Zubiri, Gregorio Honasan, Juan Ponce Enrile and Francis Pangilinan, Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya, Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro and Labor Secretary Arturo Brion. EDWIN BACASMAS

Water rates follow

Ayala-owned MWCI will increase its water rates starting Jan. 1, 2008.

MWCI said it planned to increase the "average all-in tariff" to P34.04 a cubic meter from the current P20.54 a cubic meter.

The adjustment was necessary to cover additional capital expenses in the next 15 years.

Average all-in tariff refers to the mean of all the tariffs and add-on costs related to MWCI's four customer types: Residential, semi-business, commercial and industrial.

Jeric Sevilla of MWCI Corporate Communications office said consumers would not individually bear the P14.50 per cubic meter increase.

"We are still waiting for the final resolution from the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System as to how we will spread the rates among our customers—whether we will impose it at one time next year or spread it in the next five years," Sevilla said, adding that the final water rates would be issued on Thursday or on Friday at the latest.

Staggered increases

He added that customers would be paying less than the P14-increment.

In a previous briefing, the MWSS-Regulatory Office explained that the tariff increase would translate to an average increase of P187 in the monthly bill of residents who consume 30 cubic meters or an increase of P6.20 a day.

Say, you consume 30 cubic meters of water a month, your bill would increase to P520 from the old P333 you were paying.

Sevilla said the P6.20 a day hike was applicable if MWSS decided to impose the increase on a one-time basis for the next five years (2008 to 2012).

"But based on our public consultations, consumers want the increase to be staggered over the next five years, like what we did during our rate rebasing in 2003," he said.

Back in 2003, MWCI imposed a P7-increment in two stages—a P3-increase in 2003 and a P4-increase in 2005.

MWCI president Antonino Aquino said the tariff increase was needed to ensure the reliability of water supply to the east zone and to enable the expansion of services in the next 15 years.

The planned water projects and investments are worth roughly P117 billion, he added.

"MWCI must prepare for the increase of population, effects of natural calamities and compliance with the Clean Water Act. To do so, major investments are needed to ensure 24-hour water supply," Aquino said.

These investments include finding new water sources aside from the Angat Dam, where Metro Manila sources 97 percent of its water supply, as well as the continuous repair, rehabilitation and laying down of pipelines to avoid leaks and aggressive expansion of wastewater program.

Transco bidding on today; judge dismisses TRO

From page A1

titioner, La Costa Development Corp., had failed to prove that "great or irreparable injury" would result in the meantime that the court had not decided on its petition for a writ of preliminary injunction.

La Costa, headed by nickel mining magnate Salvador Zamora II and former Finance Secretary Roberto de Ocampo, has been disqualified from today's bidding by Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM), which is tasked with selling Transco.

The consortium has accused PSALM and its president, Jose Ibazeta, of violating the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act as well as favoring another group affiliated with influential businessman Enrique Razon.

Qualified to participate in the final bidding today are the consortium of Monte Oro Grid Resources Corp. and State Grid Corp. of China; the group of Two Rivers Pacific Holdings Corp. and Terna-Rete Electtrica Nazionale Spa.; the joint venture between San Miguel Energy Corp. and TPG Aurora BV; and the partnership between Citadel Holdings Inc. and Power Grid Corp. of India Ltd.

'Charade'

The Monte Oro consortium—a partnership between Monte Oro Grid Resources Corp. and State Grid Corp. of China—is identified with the group of Razon. He was treasurer of the administration Team Unity in the May senatorial elections and is close to President Macapagal-Arroyo .

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and Sen. Jamby Madrigal have denounced today's bidding, alleging conflict of interest because Ibazeta is an official in Razon's corporate board. Razon heads International Container Terminal Services Inc. (ICTSI).

Madrigal has also claimed that a brother of President Arroyo, Diosdado "Buboy" Macapagal Jr., has an interest in Monte Oro. She has urged the Senate blue ribbon committee to investigate the sale, warning of a "lutong makaw" or a done deal.

Ibazeta yesterday said only an order from the Supreme Court could stop today's bidding, pointing out that this is provided for under the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (Epira) of 2001.

"Barring such an order from the Supreme Court, given that all preparations are in place, there is no reason to stop the Transco bidding," he said in a statement.

Ibazeta also said that another issue that one of the bidding groups—the consortium of Two Rivers Pacific Holdings Corp. and Terna-Rete Electtrica Nazionale Spa. of Italy—did not have a 60-percent Filipino component was not a hindrance to today's auction.

The Securities and Exchange Commission has issued separate legal opinions confirming that the pre-qualified bidders for the Transco concession all met the Filipino nationality requirement for the operation of the 25-year Transco concession.

Ibazeta said the SEC's Office of the General Counsel had confirmed that each of the groups' proposed structure and equity investments met the ownership requirement for grantees of a public utility franchise.

"We are hopeful that the confirmation from the SEC as to the nationality of the bidders will put to rest all doubts about their qualification. This is just more reason for us to push through with the Dec. 12 bidding," he said.

Approved strategy

He also reiterated that what PSALM would be bidding out was the right to operate, maintain and expand Transco through a concession agreement, and not the Transco assets themselves.

"This is the strategy approved by the President as early as five years ago, and the soundness of this privatization mode is affirmed by the consistent—even increasing—interest from potential bidders," Ibazeta said.

Because the Makati RTC has decided to continue hearing La Costa's application for the issuance of a writ of preliminary injunction, La Costa has not given up on its fight against alleged foul play surrounding the Transco privatization.

"The nonissuance of the TRO to allow us to take part in the bidding does not doom our judicial remedy," said La Costa legal counsel Napoleon Poblador.

Injunction hearing goes on

The hearing on the petition for the writ of preliminary injunction was conducted yesterday and was to resume next week, Poblador said.

"The trial court can stop the implementation of the bidding at any of its subsequent stages. We will also go to the Supreme Court to question the order of the trial court denying our TRO application. The SC has the legal authority to reverse the bidding and all its effects," he said.

La Costa said it was willing to bid for the Transco concession for as much as $6 billion, or double the lone bid price during the last failed bidding in February. It said that PSALM's privatization, bidding and awards committee's (PBAC) disqualification of the consortium was a crime under the antigraft law.

PBAC had disqualified La Costa because it was not satisfied that La Costa Development Corp., as the Philippine member of the concessionaire, had the ability to fund an equity investment of at least $300 million.

But La Costa, which tapped SNC Lavallin of Canada as its foreign technical partner, said it had fully complied with the bidding procedures and proved its capability to fund the required equity investment.

A crown jewel

Transco has been described as one of the government's "crown jewels." With Transco's power transmission grid and fiber optic cables, the winner of the auction could also become a powerful player in the telecommunications industry with its own broadband backbone network.

Madrigal said the holding of the bidding today would be a "victory for Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and her cronies."

Pimentel said the government had failed to answer the basic question of how it could possibly ensure a fair auction with Ibazeta under Razon's payroll.

Erap ready to make up with GMA but will fight Charter change

From page A1

Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson.

Not that, Estrada said, he would stop being a member of the opposition.

"In a democracy, there's always the opposition. We will continue to be the check and balance," he said.

But when asked to explain his reasons for forgiving Ms Arroyo and Singson, whom he and his family had accused of engineering his fall from power in 2001, Estrada turned positively mellow:

"I have said time and again that the Holy Spirit put into my mind and my heart that to live peacefully, forget all the good things you did to others and forget the bad things that others did to you. That is why I am living peacefully now.

"I've been reminded by the Lord's Prayer that we should forgive."

But the man is not done fighting.

3 proposals

Estrada took on a fighting stance in reaction to reports that members of the House of Representatives were preparing to deliberate on at least three proposals to amend the Constitution.

He promised to fight the Arroyo administration which had pardoned him if it would push for the amendment of the 1987 Constitution to pave the way for a shift from the presidential to the parliamentary form of government.

"I will fight it. I will lead the rallies against it," Estrada declared in an interview at the sidelines of a luncheon hosted by one of his sons, San Juan Mayor Joseph Victor "JV" Ejercito, in thanksgiving for being chosen by the Philippine Jaycees as one of The Outstanding Young Men for public service.

It was an award that Estrada himself received 35 years ago.

Estrada said he was against Charter change because it would "deprive the poor of the chance to choose their own president."

He said the right to directly elect the leader of the country was the great equalizer between the rich and the poor. And if the administration persists in changing the form of government and taking away this right, "there will surely be chaos," he said.

Estrada, who was convicted of two counts of plunder in September and pardoned in October, stopped short of saying that the Charter change initiatives indicated Ms Arroyo's desire to hold on to power beyond 2010, when her term ends and the next presidential election is scheduled.

But he said the administration—which, recent surveys said, was perceived as the most corrupt *(see banner story on Page A1)* yet—was lucky because Filipinos were "patient."

Mayor Ejercito echoed his father's remark on forgiving Ms Arroyo et al., but said his family would not forget their "sins."

"We can forgive the person, but we should not forget the sins so that these will not happen again," he said.

Ejercito also said the opposition would fight tooth and nail against Charter change moves in the House.

He voiced the opposition's long-held stance that the initiatives were geared to "prolong" Ms Arroyo's hold on the presidency.

Ejercito said the administration should not try the people's patience by pushing for Charter change.

He said that if the administration insisted on doing so, this could lead to Ms Arroyo's ouster.

"Everything has its limits. The people will protest if the abuses continue," he said.

Overwhelming clamor

The committee on constitutional amendments chaired by La Union Rep. Victor Ortega, a member of the ruling Lakas-CMD, will focus on House Concurrent Resolutions No. 3, No. 6 and No. 7 authored respectively by Camarines Sur Rep. Felix Alfelor, Agusan del Norte Rep. Edelmiro Amante and Cebu Rep. Antonio Cuenco.

The three resolutions call for a constitutional convention to propose amendments to the Charter and to provide for the election of delegates in November 2008 to coincide with the barangay elections.

According to Amante's resolution, there is an "overwhelming clamor among the majority of our people" to amend the Constitution "to make it more receptive to the new millennium and the needs of the Filipino people."

Alfelor, Amante and Cuenco are members of the ruling coalition, which includes Lakas and Ms Arroyo's party, the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi).

House Bills No. 1752 and No. 1876, authored by Iloilo Rep. Raul Gonzalez Jr. and Pampanga Rep. Carmelo Lazatin, respectively, also call for a constitutional convention.

Atienza, Indonesian president tackle conservation of Coral Triangle

By TJ Burgonio

ENVIRONMENT SECRETARY LITO Atienza met with Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono in Bali late Monday to discuss measures to sustain the conservation of the Coral Triangle, considered the world's center of marine biodiversity.

In broad geographical terms, the Coral Triangle is believed to be located within an area centered around Eastern Indonesia, encompassing four countries: Indonesia, Australia, Philippines and Papua New Guinea, according to a 2003 report from The Nature Conservancy, Southeast Asia Center for Marine Protected Areas in Bali, Indonesia.

Atienza said the meeting was a good opportunity for Manila and Jakarta to tackle issues on how to protect and sustain the management of the marine area.

LITO ATIENZA

Issues on marine area

He, however, did not specify exactly what measures the two countries would undertake.

"Like all other ecosystems, our marine areas, including the corals and all biodiversity found beneath our seas and oceans are also vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change," Atienza said in a statement.

"The Coral Triangle, which is known to contain more than 500 species of reef-building corals, is also abundant in reef fish species, such as yellow fin tuna, big-eye tuna, bumphead parrot fish and Napoleon wrasse," he said.

Highest human population

It also supports some of the world's highest human population densities, and its resources sustain more than 120 million people, he added.

Atienza is in Bali, Indonesia as head of the Philippine delegation to the 13th Session of the Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the 3rd Meeting of Parties of the Kyoto Protocol.

Lory Tan, vice chairman of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Philippines, had said that the Coral Triangle would eventually serve as a major source of food for countries beyond the region, hence, the need for its sustainable management.

'Coral Triangle'

"The Coral Triangle is going to be the food factory of the world. From this part of the world, China, Taiwan, Japan, Australia, European Union, and the United States would buy their fish," Tan said.

"This part of the world will produce the seaweed, the shellfish, crabs and shrimp that will feed the world. So there's an opportunity here to sustainably manage this," he added.

Atienza said the Philippines would call for the setting up of an Adaptation Fund to assist highly vulnerable countries on how to adapt and mitigate the impact of climate change.

The secretary said that countries in the region shared common problems on the devastating impact of climate change like flooding, water shortage, dry season and the destruction of marine resources.

Give us jobs, Rapu Rapu folk challenge militants

LEADERS AND RESIdents of Rapu Rapu in Albay yesterday challenged militant groups to help the poor mining community and create jobs should they succeed in getting Lafayette's polymetallic project on the island closed down.

"These outsiders are risking our future and our lives in the name of the environment. Their real advocacy is to keep us poor and desperate and we all know why. And they get paid for what they do," the residents said in a joint press statement.

The joint statement was signed by barangay chairmen, councilors and residents, who said the militants and even some Church people had resorted to lying to scare the public of non-existent disasters they blame on the project.

Militant antimining groups led by Greenpeace have opposed the mining project in the area. A commission, headed by then Sorsogon Bishop Arturo Bastes, said mining spills had contaminated coastal areas with mercury and other toxic chemicals, diminishing local fishermen's catch and causing skin diseases among some of the residents.

But allegations of mercury contamination were never substantiated and were even declared a "hoax" by supporters of the mining operation.

"It is not true that there was a fishkill in Pagcolbon, where the project is, and in neighboring barangays. I live here and I can tell you we had a perfectly normal life until these outsiders started telling the world we had a fishkill," said the press statement quoting Pagcolbon resident Ananias Balato.

"The world believed these lies because Rapu Rapu is so remote that there was no immediate way of checking. But if only people can come and see for themselves, including the priests who prefer to just stay in the comfort of Legaspi City, they would realize they are actually putting at risk our present and our future without any basis," he was quoted as saying.

Militants associated with Sagip Isla, Gabriela, Bayan, and other groups have camped out in a park in Legaspi City to ask for the closure of the project because of the supposed fishkill.

Government experts, however, have ruled out the project as the cause of a supposed fishkill, which is more than 10 kilometers away.

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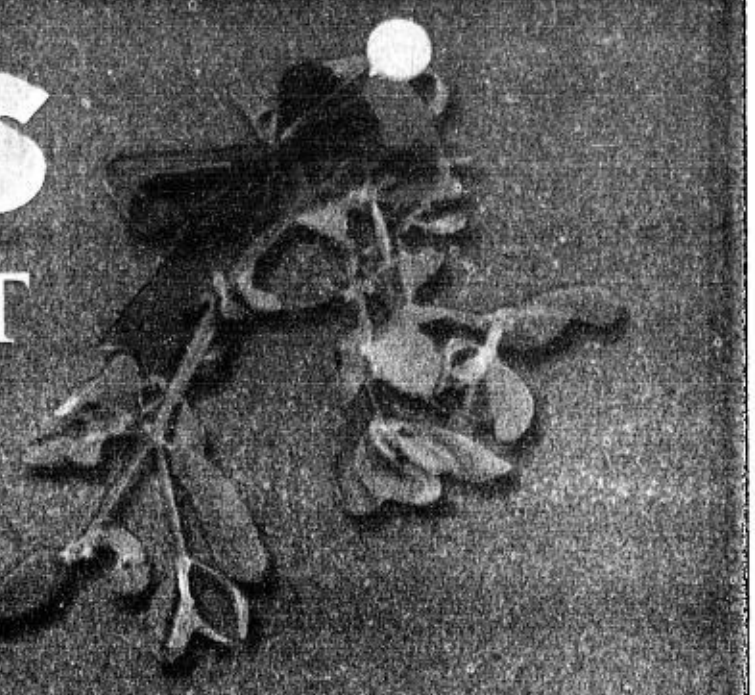

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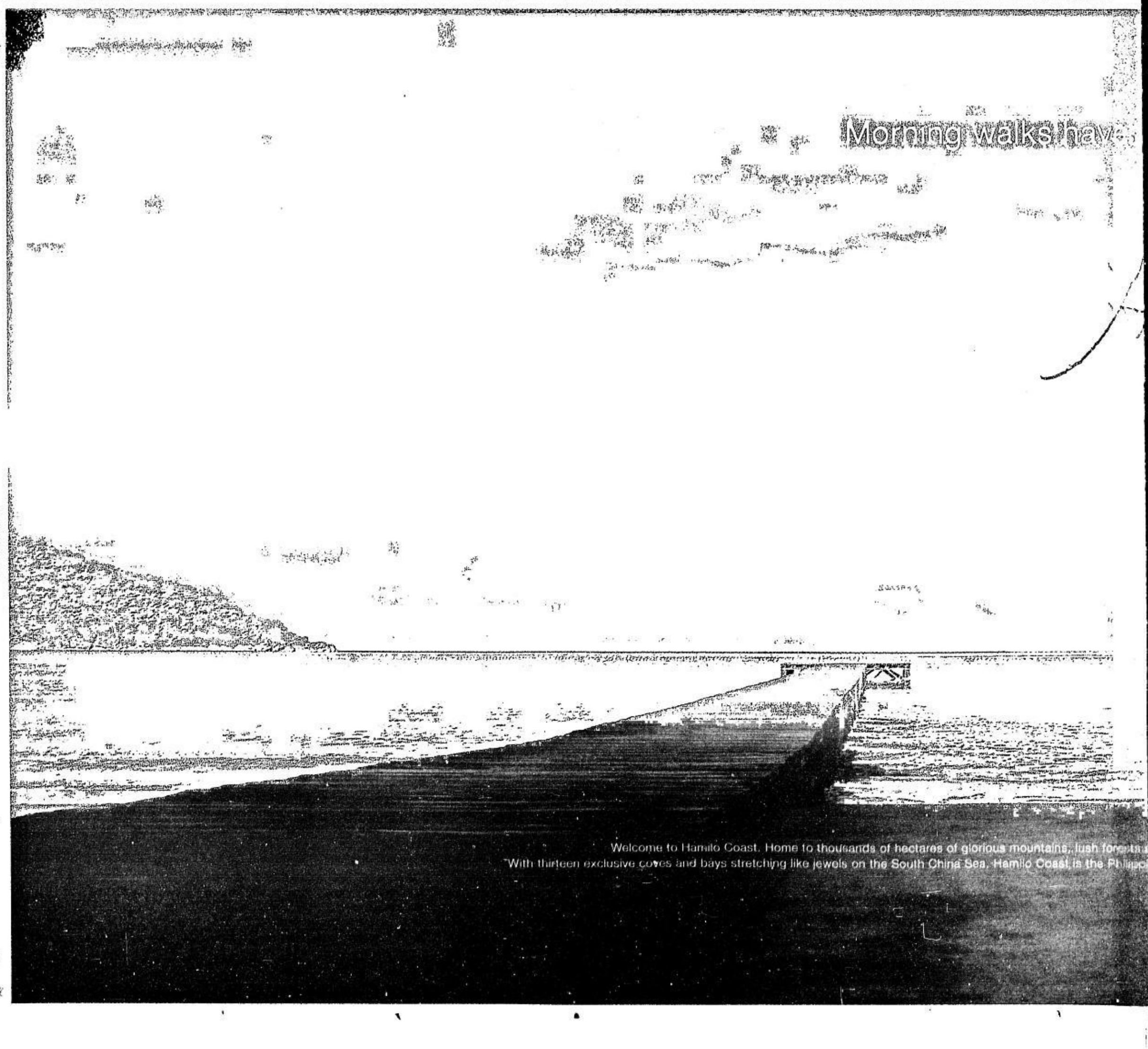

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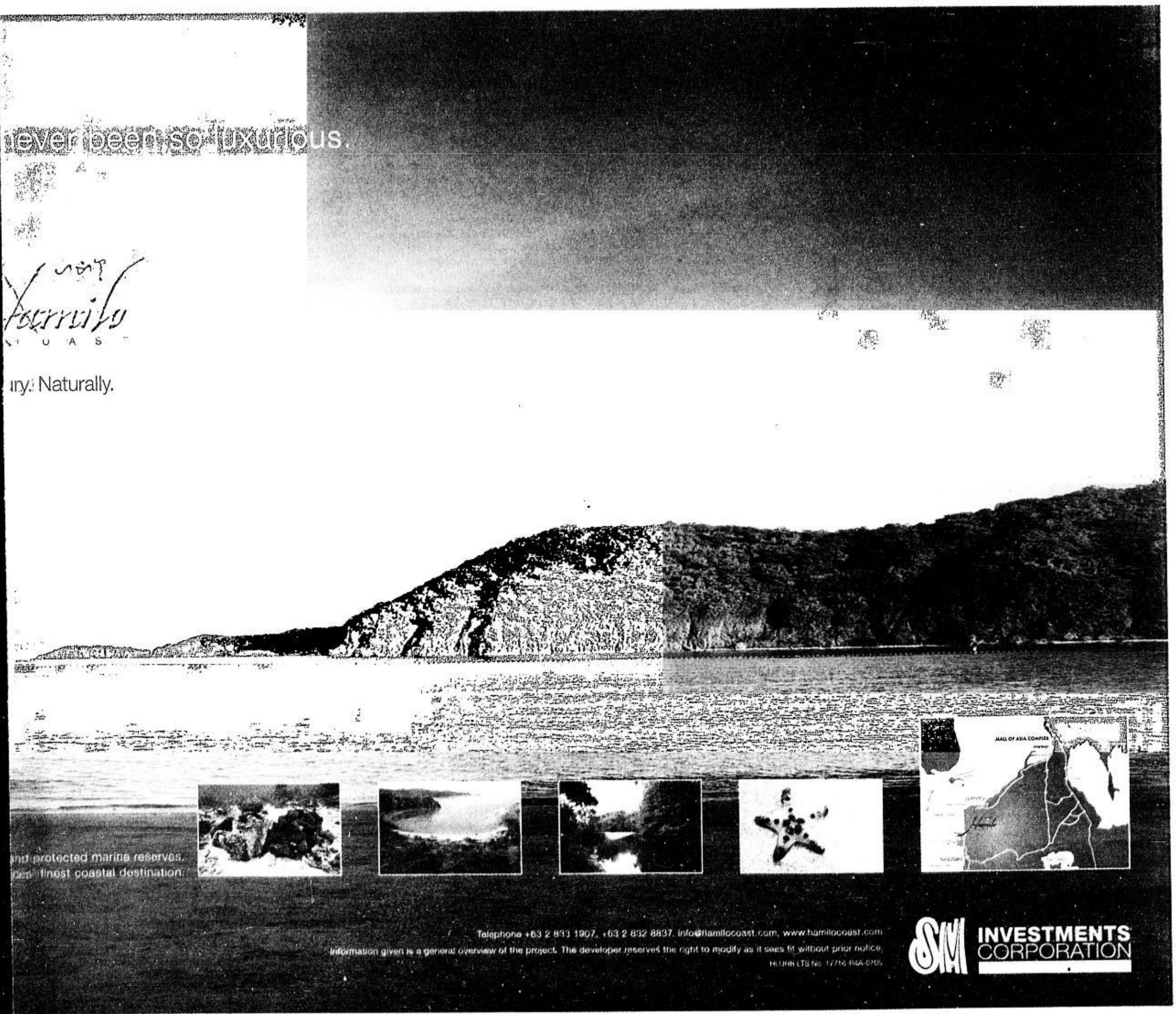

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ISSN 0116-2642 INQUIRER Vol. 23 No. 4

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•Our telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments
•Editorial Fax 897-4793 / 897-4794 •Advertising 897-4807
•Circulation 523-5570
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Gore's challenge

EDITORIAL

FEW POLITICIANS GET TO ENJOY A SECOND LIFE, and fewer still get to make the transition from politico to statesman while out of power. Yet that's been the good fortune, for himself and the world, of Al Gore. As co-recipient with the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Gore accepted the Nobel Peace Prize and gave a ringing endorsement to People Power. According to him, People Power has begun to develop into a truly global movement, with the environment as its motive force.

Gore said that the international environmental movement will be even more formidable than the nuclear-freeze movement of the 1970s and 1980s. And in light of his assertion, we need only point to examples here and close to home, of how citizens have pressured their governments on their environmental scores.

Here at home, the proposed Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement (Jpepa) was almost wrecked when it ran aground on environmentalists' objections, forcing the Philippine and Japanese governments to replace the gray areas in the text of the proposed agreement with explicit re-commitments to existing international agreements on hazardous wastes. In a recent provincial forum, one student, upset over perceptions of apathy among the younger generation, said it isn't true at all, but talking about political rights is old-fashioned, while concern for the environment is a truly vital cause.

It may be that what Gore and that student have begun to explore is that environmentalism is the new political activism, because it involves a fundamental sense of community interests and challenging officialdom if it won't see it that way. In Australia, the hard-line Howard administration was swept out of office on a tide of repugnance for his strong-arm methods and, in particular, his contempt for the environment. Immediately upon his assumption to office, new Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd announced that his country would finally sign the Kyoto Protocol.

But there remain two nations bucking the global trend: the United States and China. Both are patently hostile to international public opinion, particularly if it affects their economic ambitions and insatiable thirst for the resources that make possible unbridled consumption.

UN officials have proposed cutting carbon-dioxide emissions by 40 percent, the cobbling together of a new "roadmap" to maintain the momentum of efforts to curb global warming; and the continuation of the hard work required to come up with a successor agreement to the Kyoto Protocol which expires in 2012. Investments in alternative forms of energy need to be encouraged, too, as nations begin to grapple with the unforeseen costs of putting all their eggs in the biofuels basket. For every hectare of agricultural land devoted to biofuels, that's one hectare unable to produce food; global food prices have begun to spike as a result.

In Bali, a showdown is expected between global opinion and the domestic interests of the Americans and the Chinese. The United States announced that it would continue to oppose specific targets for emission-cutting for countries. China pleaded that it must continue its national development and not have its hands tied by environmental considerations, though it, too, has begun to quietly invest in alternative fuels and in greener buildings and developments.

While both the United States and China will probably remain intransigent in Bali, there is some hope on the horizon. Whether that hope will merely be an aspiration or a political reality, however, lies in large part on Gore himself. If he sees global People Power in terms of the environmental cause, he has a large role to play to ensure that it manifests itself in his country. He has received praise for stubbornly staying on message, in environmental terms. He has taken himself out of the 2008 presidential race in no small part, because he wants to maintain a kind of moral ascendancy in that regard.

We can only hope that as a statesman, he inspires American voters to make the environment a central issue in the coming presidential elections. It can help restore the US image as a major force in global cooperation, instead of the rogue state that in many ways it has become since George W. Bush took office.

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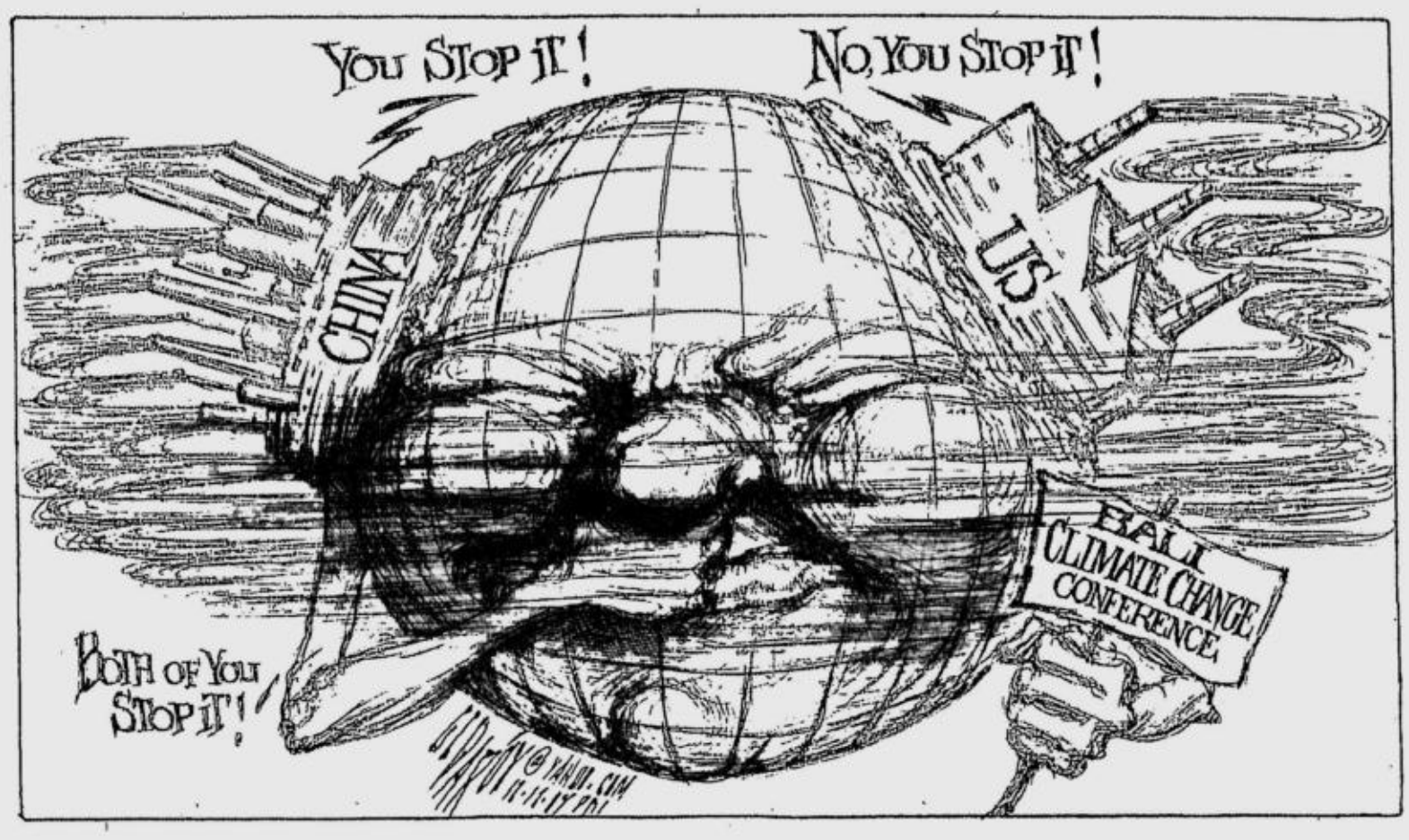

Hail to the Chief for saving a housemaid

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

"I THINK I'M A PRETTY GOOD ECONOMIST but a very bad politician," President Macapagal-Arroyo told a group of British investors, unashamedly patting herself on the back.

That statement is both true and false. True: "I'm a very bad politician." False: "I think I'm a pretty good economist." She thought wrong.

The politician part speaks for itself, but she has to be told the truth on the economist part. The main prop to the claim that the Philippines has a "strong economy" is the escalating exchange rate of the peso against the dollar. The peso-dollar exchange rate is going up not because the peso is strong but because the dollar is weak. The dollar is sinking against all currencies but the peso is not rising against all other currencies. And the peso rate is going up not because the Philippine economy is strong, but because the millions-strong overseas Filipino workers are sending home the dollars they earn abroad. It's a case of supply and demand. Take away the OFW earnings and the Philippine economy will fall flat on its face. Our economy is being kept afloat by the blood, sweat and tears of our OFWs.

Filipinos are working abroad in greater numbers not because of a policy or encouragement by the government. They are forced to go there because there are no jobs here at home. If they do not make sacrifices and leave their families while they work abroad, they would starve to death.

If our economy is healthy, there would be plenty of jobs here, and the wages and salaries would be comparable to those of other countries with healthy economies. But Filipinos who are already employed are forced to work abroad because their pay is not enough to support their families. The only people making a good living are the top officials in the Arroyo administration. They will always make a good living whether the economy is good or bad.

In a good economy, everybody would be employed, everybody would have enough to eat, and everybody would live in decent homes. Just one look at all those squatter colonies and at the unemployment rate and you know that something is very bad in the Philippine economy. Who made it that way? Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

Prices were much lower during the administrations of Presidents Marcos, Aquino, Estrada—even that of Ramos. And I don't mean only the oil that we import but also the rice, vegetables and fruits that we grow and the fish that we catch. In fact, home-grown agricultural products and domestic fish are more expensive than imported ones. Which means the Arroyo administration cannot even sustain our agricultural output.

If GMA learned anything in the school of economics, it should have been that in a nation with a healthy economy, everybody would be prosperous, there would be no poor people. But about half of our population consider themselves poor, millions have little to eat, and young children are forced to commit suicide because of poverty.

At the same time that young children are dying, the Arroyo administration is distributing half-million-peso bribes right in the presidential palace and circumnavigating the globe with hordes of "equally bad politicians," with the poor Filipino taxpayers footing the bill.

* * *

GMA deserves praise for making a side-trip to Kuwait on her way home from London to save one of our OFWs, Marilou Ranario, from execution.

This reminds me of another OFW, and another President who could have saved her but didn't. The hapless Flor Contemplacion was scheduled to be executed in Singapore while President Fidel V. Ramos was on one of his numerous junkets (FVR is the most traveled Filipino president, with GMA trying to catch up).

There was a clamor at home for the President to make a side-trip to Singapore and save the Filipino domestic helper from the gallows. But FVR probably thought it was beneath his dignity to plead for a mere housemaid. So he went straight home and did not pass by Singapore. Had he done that, who knows, Contemplacion may still be alive today, like Sarah Balabagan, who was saved by Ambassador Roy Señeres whom GMA fired as chief judge of the labor court.

But FVR did not take the trouble, and Contemplacion was sacrificed, a bloody blot on the Ramos administration.

* * *

But there is one other big question mark in GMA's present trip. The Spanish government gave her an award for "preserving human rights in her country."

What? Why on earth did they do that? If they wanted to flatter her, they could have given an award for some other thing, say, as a teller of tall tales. But for human rights? Are the Spaniards incredibly stupid? Give a "human rights award" to a President during whose administration more journalists and other citizens have been killed or disappeared than in the whole 20 years of Marcos' martial law? Very few of the murderers have been arrested, prosecuted, or jailed. Marcos appears like a benevolent dictator compared to GMA.

Filipinos can't even march to Mendiola without being bludgeoned by policemen and hosed by firemen. Journalists out to do their job of reporting an impending massacre at a five-star hotel are arrested, manacled and taken to a military camp. Top executives are prevented from testifying in investigations by the Senate. Suspects and detainees are taken out by policemen and shot down like animals and the police claim they were killed in shootouts. You call that a human rights record that the Spaniards should honor with an award?

Death march

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I JUST RETRIEVED MY DVD OF "VIVA ZAPATA!," a movie starring Marlon Brando, written by the formidable John Steinbeck (based on his novel). It begins this way:

It is Mexico, 1909, a group of dirt-poor peasants has sought an audience with their president, Porfirio Diaz. Their complaint is that a plantation has taken over their land and fenced them off, destroying their corn and planting sugar instead. "Can you prove that these are your lands, my children?" Diaz asks. The peasants produce documents from the Spanish Crown and the Mexican Republic. "If this is true," says Diaz, "you have no problem, the court will settle this." He offers his personal attorney to help them and excuses himself saying he has other matters to attend to; it is not easy being president, particularly one who has been so for 34 years.

As the peasants file away, Zapata stays behind and tells the president. "Do you know of any land suit that was won by country people?" Diaz tells him: "These things take time. You must be patient." Zapata replies: "With your permission, Mr. President, we make our tortillas with corn, not with patience."

Nothing came out of the peasants' plea and Zapata went on to lead a land revolt in Morelos, eventually joining Pancho Villa in fighting to free Mexico.

I remembered the opening of "Viva Zapata!" in light of the Sumilao farmers trooping to Malacañang to petition their president to help them in their land problem. The parallels are uncanny, and offer no small amount of savage commentary on our situation today. The only difference between the two scenes is that Diaz had the grace to receive his "children" if only to humor them, while the Sumilao folks' president, such as they are compelled to call her so, was too busy receiving a medal in Spain for human rights to see them. And her minions in Malacañang were too busy readying their pork, or ham, for Christmas to bother with them.

While at this, what's that business with Spain honoring GMA for her contributions to human rights, and right on the eve of International Human Rights Day? For sheer atrocity, that goes even beyond then US Vice President George Bush toasting Ferdinand Marcos for his adherence to democracy. The specific reason for Spain's award to GMA, which is that she has abolished the death penalty, doesn't make things better, but makes for diabolical irony. I know the Spanish ambassador to be a decent fellow and wonder why he couldn't implore his government enough to desist from committing a humongous faux pas. The award mocks the spirit of Miguel de Cervantes, the man who birthed the word "quixotic," after whom the Spanish cultural center is named. It offers only fresh reminders of the time in this country when the friars paraded themselves as the embodiment of God's truth and justice. While spouting that divinely contemptuous phrase, "*an mana indio....*"

But to go back, the only difference between the two scenes is that Diaz received his scraggly guests and GMA did not. Otherwise, they are nearly identical. Like the Morelos peasants, the Sumilao folk have been driven off their land by a large landowner. Like the Morelos peasants, the Sumilao farmers can't plant their land with rice and corn, they are fenced off from it by barbed wire and armed guards, and can't prove the land is theirs. Like the Morelos peasants, the Sumilao farmers' ability to win a court case even if they had the most ironclad proof of ownership is next to nothing anyway, as shown by the fact that they did lose it, notwithstanding that previous Agrarian Reform Secretary Butch Abad is certain the land is theirs by law, by God and by justice.

Like the Morelos peasants, the Sumilao farmers will probably have to deal with the same president for 34 years—unless they and their compatriots do something about it.

If the Sumilao farmers have done anything by their long march (it began way back in October), it is only to drive home several things:

One is that this country hasn't barged into the new millennium, it has crept back to the old one. The two scenes, the Morelos peasants and the Sumilao farmers, are nearly identical except that the one happened at the start of the 20th century and the other at the start of the 21st. They are one century apart. The mind-boggling thing in fact is that we should be having these problems at this late date, showing how the "spectacular divide" between rich and poor, much of it owing to landlessness on the part of the many, which conscientious Filipinos agonized over in the Huk-ravaged 1950s, hasn't closed, it has widened.

Two is to highlight even more the cruel irony of that ubiquitous TV ad that says, "*ramdam na ramdam na*," to suggest that Filipinos have never had it better than today. Filipinos can now truly feel the change in their lives, but that is not in the direction of improvement. "We don't want food," a Sumilao marcher cried angrily at the relief goods that went their way, "we want land." It's an awkward way to put it, of course, but it's not hard to catch its meaning. We've heard it before in other ways: "We don't want fish, we want the means to catch fish." "We don't want charity, we want justice."

I don't know which one makes the ad more ironic, the march of the Sumilao farmers to nowhere or the slipping into oblivion of Mariannet Amper. *Ramdam na ramdam na ang—gloria* or Gloria?

Three is to put the images of Trillanes' and Lim's revolt and the Sumilao farmers' march side by side, one an extra-constitutional and violent means of solving things and the other a perfectly legal and peaceable way of doing so; one an impatient rush to change things and the other a patient wait to do so. It is to do that and remember:

Tortillas are made with corn, not with patience.

Man or monster?

WORLD VIEW

Putsata Reang

PHNOM PENH—THE APPEARANCE OF THE first former Khmer Rouge leader before a special hybrid court established in Cambodia to bring that movement's surviving leaders to justice provoked a question on which the tribunal's integrity will depend: Should an accused mass murderer be released from prison pending his trial?

Kaing Guek Eav, commonly known as "Duch," presided over the deaths of more than 14,000 people at S-21, a former Phnom Penh high school turned into a torture center. He is one of five senior Khmer Rouge leaders who will be made to answer for their roles during Pol Pot's genocide, in which an estimated 1.7 million Cambodians perished. Until recently, Duch was the only one imprisoned, after being exposed in 1999.

The court, with its improbable blend of Cambodian and foreign judges and attorneys as well as laws, is meant to be a model for judicial reform and independent justice in a country where impunity has long been the rule. The five red-robed judges who preside over the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (the tribunal's official name) are the final arbiters of Duch's detention, but the question they are now considering belongs as much to the people of Cambodia as it does to the court: Should mass murderers be afforded the same rights as everyone else?

One of my aunts has a strong opinion on the matter. Khmer Rouge soldiers beat her father to death, and she remembers being shot at for sport by communist cadres as she and dozens of other peasants scuttled up a mountainside. She now lives one block from S-21. "Human rights are for humans," she said emphatically when I asked her about Duch's case. "He is a monster."

I once believed that, too. When I first visited Duch's house of horrors in 1990, I was 15 and full of wonder about the country where I was born but had never lived. My family escaped the Khmer Rouge on April 17, 1975, the day they claimed victory. When my mother and I journeyed home to reunite with relatives who had survived the genocide, S-21 (also known as Tuol Sleng) was among our first stops.

By then, the torture facility had been turned into a museum. I remember feeling claustrophobic as I walked down its narrow halls and into classrooms turned into crude cellblocks. The air was stale but heavy with the stench of death in interrogation chambers, barren save for a single bed frame, shackles and a chair. Flecks of dried blood peeled up from the floor.

This was a place where fingernails of countless victims were ripped out, where others were strung upside down and dunked in barrels of water, where many were brutalized with metal prongs and batons. This was a place of utter brokenness. This was Duch's place.

Mostly, I remember the hundreds of black and white mug shots of prisoners and victims that covered every inch of the walls—a ghastly montage of human suffering that haunts me to this day. I couldn't help but think: this was somebody's daughter, somebody's son; this was somebody's mother or sister or brother.

Back then, I thought: What monster could do such things?

Now, that monster is sitting in a courtroom, looking scared and meek as prosecutors catalogued his alleged war crimes. Sitting in the packed auditorium where snatches of Duch's face flash by on a movie screen, I'm struck by what I see: a face that belongs to someone. This alleged perpetrator of unspeakable misdeeds is, like his victims, someone's son, someone's brother, someone's father.

This might have been only a fleeting thought had I not seen Duch's family members, who attended the hearings. Hang Seav Heang, 28, described the defendant as a gentle man, a good father. One of his sisters said he was a caring, protective brother, and that she would always love him.

Outside the courtroom and in the community, most of the Khmers I talked to were, like my aunt, quick to categorize Duch as something other than human. Duch must have thought much the same thing about his victims when he ordered them to their deaths. When we start to see each other as less than human, we respond with inhuman acts.

It is this narrow, black-and-white view of humanity that has perpetuated a cycle of violence in Cambodia, where raging mobs beat to death robbery suspects and young mistresses suffer acid attacks by jealous wives. To say that Duch is a monster who does not deserve rights ignores the gray area between good and evil, between man and monster, where anything is possible.

This trial is about that gray area, about that place in us all where morality decays and evil takes root and grows, the way mold prevails given the right conditions. Each of us carries this potential for rot.

There is no dispute that Duch violated the rights of thousands of Khmers. But if the basic premise of these trials is to uphold human rights, then we are obliged to extend that same principle to Duch. What does it say to the country and the world if a court convened to mete out justice flouts the law? Isn't lawlessness the plague we are finally trying to eradicate in Cambodia?

The judges have offered no indication when they will make a decision. And no one would blame them for taking their time to consider their options. This is, after all, the court's first test of fairness before the trials of Duch and four of Pol Pot's other henchmen begin next year.

We all want justice, but that justice should not come at the cost of our humanity.

Project Syndicate/The Asia Society

Putsata Reang is a fellow of The Asia Society.

Migrant nation

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

WE HAVE MUCH TO BE GRATEFUL FOR, OF course, to the Emir of Kuwait and to President Macapagal-Arroyo for saving the life of Marilou Ranario. The Emir, Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmed Al Sabah, for commuting Ranario's death sentence to life imprisonment, and the President for going out of her way and putting the prestige of her office on the line by meeting with him and personally appealing on the Filipino domestic worker's behalf.

But it is still only a partial victory, and considering the resources put into the campaign to save Ranario, a most costly one, the full value of which we might still be paying for many years from now.

While Ranario has been saved from execution, she still faces life imprisonment, even if the Emir has promised that once her employer's family accepts Ranario's apology and the "blood money," he could cut her jail term further. But Ranario will not be coming home for some time yet, and to secure her freedom, our government has put the full weight of its prestige and reputation, not to mention its diplomatic leverage, on the line.

The same report that carried news of the Emir's commutation said overseas workers now contribute $12.8 billion annually in remittances, about 10 percent of gross domestic product. Some even maintain that it's the money that OFWs send home that keeps the economy from teetering over the edge.

OFWs are both the country's strength and its vulnerability. While they keep our economy afloat, and lift their families here from the trap of poverty, they have also shaped our foreign policy and made it vulnerable to the laws and policies of "host" countries. In many cases, as in Ranario's, our leaders have also become beholden to their officials, subject to the benevolence of rulers like the Emir of Kuwait or criminals, like the Iraqi militants who kidnapped Angelo de la Cruz.

* * *

THIS is not the first time that the Philippines, either through the government itself or private donors, has paid "blood money" to the families of individuals who died at the hands of an overseas Filipino worker.

The first case I remember is that of Sarah Balabagan who was convicted of stabbing her male employer (she claimed she did so in self-defense during an attempted rape) and was "ransomed" from her prison through a prominent businessman's donation. Upon her release and repatriation, she was brought around the country, achieving the status of a folk heroine. A movie was even made about her plight, though its commercial release was delayed because of political and diplomatic considerations. Sarah even made a stab at show business herself.

Government officials and even business leaders scrambled to save Sarah mainly because they had learned from the painful execution of Flor Contemplacion, who was hanged in Singapore on charges of killing her ward, despite the representations of the Philippine government and even the emergence of a witness who told a contradictory story. Contemplacion's death seemed to touch a nerve here, leading to widespread protests and the dismissal of some officials.

And yet responses to such crises like that of Flor Contemplacion, Sarah Balabagan and now Marilou Ranario take on something of an ad hoc nature. True, it is difficult to predict the way people subject to such tremendous loneliness, isolation and dislocation as our overseas workers would react to stresses. And thus it would be difficult to prepare sufficiently for every exigency. But should every crisis be resolved only through direct intercession of the President?

* * *

AN ARTICLE in the Los Angeles Times describes current Philippine policy on overseas labor as a "vicious migration trap," with some 11 million Filipinos overseas enduring "a life of lonely, risky sacrifice." And yet, even if remittances keep the economy afloat, most observers concede that the policy of encouraging labor exports has not led to prosperity, despite more than 30 years' and two generations' experience.

The same article concludes that indeed labor export has become a "formula for stagnation," with government growing increasingly dependent on earnings from abroad while failing to make the necessary investments in education, health and job generation.

A recent study has found that government's neglect and spendthrift ways are mirrored by the families left behind by OFWs. Most of the money sent home, it was found, has gone to buy consumer goods, instead of being funneled into productive investments, including education.

* * *

FORTUNATELY, there was another OFW story recently that shows how OFWs and the families they leave behind can maintain the ties that bind them and help society in the process.

For every child or spouse feeling resentment at being sacrificed on the altar of prosperity, there is an OFW suffering from intense loneliness and perhaps resentment, too, at being seen as merely a meal ticket and supplier of imported goods.

To this, says Corazon Atuel whose husband Eugenio works as a ship captain, the antidote is frequent communication and treating each other and their seven children as "friends." The Atuels join two other families recognized as "Model OFW Family of the Year," a belated nod to the role that the family plays in the success of an overseas worker.

Perhaps we can extend the model of the Atuels and other families to the nation as a whole and to our migrant population. We need to keep our OFWs within the bosom of national concerns, view them as an essential part of national life and stop treating them merely as sources of remittances. As family members and as a nation, we must send our loved ones abroad and invest their earnings wisely so that in the future there may no longer be any need for them to leave.

The shepherd finds his voice

COMMENTARY

Nono Alfonso, SJ
John J. Carroll Institute on Church and Social Issues

"OUR SALVATION DEPENDS ON HOW WE treat the poor." Thus declared Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales, addressing the crowd that gathered at the Ateneo de Manila University campus last Wednesday to welcome the Sumilao farmers. He was referring to Matthew 25, where Jesus makes it clear that on Judgment Day we will be held accountable for what we have done to the poor: "For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, a stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.... Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me. And these will go off to eternal punishment."

The Sumilao farmers have walked some 1,700 kilometers from Bukidnon in search of their own salvation. They were beneficiaries of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program who were awarded their land titles in 1995. But the following year, the land titles were cancelled. By a sleight of hand which the cardinal called "magic, magic," the owner of the land applied for land conversion, and then Executive Secretary Ruben Torres overturned the ruling of the Department of Agrarian Reform and the mandate of the agrarian reform law.

When the Sumilao farmers went on hunger strike in 1997, President Fidel V. Ramos, like Solomon, offered a "win-win" solution, awarding 100 hectares to the farmers and the remaining 44 hectares for land-use conversion. But the Supreme Court found this invalid on technical grounds, saying that Torres' order had become final and so the time to challenge it had lapsed.

It has been 10 years since the Sumilao farmers went on strike. The landowner's promise of converting and developing the land into agro-industrial use, which became their alibi to escape CARP and which Torres foolishly bought, has not materialized, exposing it for what it was: a ploy to circumvent the law.

> His pronouncement last Wednesday is a clarion call that in matters like the Sumilao case, he will not go silent, for, as he says, our very salvation depends on this

There is a new owner, San Miguel Corp., which is now rushing to build a piggery in the area. "*Pinagpalit kami sa mga baboy* (We were replaced by hogs)," says one Sumilao farmer.

The farmers have appealed their case to the DAR, which seems to be taking its sweet time on their case. In the meantime, to dramatize their plight, the Sumilao farmers made their long march, perhaps to freedom and justice. "*Hindi dapat kami naglalakad, dapat nagtatanim lang kami ng makakain ng bansa* (We shouldn't be walking but planting to feed the nation)," says another Sumilao farmer.

Cardinal Rosales was at the gates of the Ateneo to welcome them on a short stopover. Upon seeing him, a woman farmer ran toward their former pastor and melted in his arms, "Bishop!"

During their long march, critics have tried to discredit the identity of the farmers, saying they were puppets of some activist groups. But the cardinal, who was bishop of Bukidnon for 11 years before being transferred to Lipa City and then Manila, had this to say to these critics: "I know them. I was their pastor." Would anyone want to make a liar of the cardinal?

"Tilt the law in favor of the poor," said the cardinal. Reading from his letter to President Macapagal-Arroyo, which he asked the farmers to personally give to her, he said that he didn't want to get into the details of their case with the President, except to say that he knew the farmers and that there is one thing that he is certain of: in this country the rich are always favored over the poor. He ended his homily with an appeal: "Give back the land to the Sumilao farmers!"

Cardinal Rosales has so far stayed clear of politics. He has been criticized for doing so. But the mind of the cardinal is clear when it comes to the poor. His Pondo ng Pinoy, a financing scheme for social projects, demonstrates his love for the poor. His pronouncement last Wednesday is a clarion call that in matters like the Sumilao case, he will not go silent, for, as he says, our very salvation depends on this.

The Prince of the Church has spoken. Will the President of the Republic heed his voice?

Liberalism

THIS YEAR ON HUMAN RIGHTS DAY, I WAS REFLECTING, and wondering if in recent years we have retrogressed with respect to our human rights situation, what with the assassinations and disappearances of leftists. There are many other disturbing signs of our neglect of human rights, from the plight of the Sumilao farmers to the growing numbers of street children sent out to beg in the name of Christmas.

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

There is no lack of reminders about human rights in the media. In schools, students are made to memorize all kinds of lists of human rights, such as those provided in the Universal Declaration, as well as more specific formulations, such as the rights of children. All of which is well and good, but I also think we need to talk about the origins of these concepts of human rights, and the many struggles that allow us to enjoy those rights. Even more importantly, we have to understand not only what those struggles stood for, but also what it fought against.

Western liberalism

It's especially important that we understand how these human rights were crafted in the context of Western liberalism, and I'm using those terms with great respect and admiration, in contrast to current prevailing sentiments that see both "Western" and "liberalism" as the enemies.

Liberalism is a philosophy, a way of life, that builds on the rights of the individual. The very term builds on the concept of freedom, the Latin "*liber*" meaning "free," as in not being a slave. Liberalism took many centuries to build, its foundations dating back to the Greek philosophers. As a political philosophy, liberalism bloomed full force in the 18th century with the triumph of the American and French revolutions.

The ideas of liberalism did not come out of armchair philosophizing. The philosophers themselves were reacting to the society around them, and in the context of Europe, these thinkers were caught in the maelstroms of a dying feudal ancient regime. They opposed monarchies and the idea of rulers invoking "divine right." No, liberals said, if one rules, it is not because God wants you to but because of a mandate from people. The liberal democracies that evolved out of this kind of thinking were to emphasize the right of the individual to choose who will govern, and the accountability of those who are elected into office.

Liberals are not necessarily anti-religion, but their history is marked by a questioning of the authority of religions, especially that of the Catholic Church, because its clergy were often so closely associated with the feudal lords and the parasitic aristocracy. It is said that the French philosopher Voltaire wished at his deathbed that the last king be strangled with the guts of the last priest.

Liberal democracy, being liberal, is less drastic with its safeguards against religious excess, emphasizing the separation of church and state. Today, it is this separation that is coming under severe threat from those who would restore theocracies. Don't just think of al-Qaida here. CNN recently had an excellent three-part documentary on "God's warriors" of every stripe—Muslims, Jews, Christians—who distort scriptures to dismiss human rights, arguing that these are "human" fabrications, in contrast to their own God-given "natural" laws.

Liberals are secular and therefore make no claims to perfection. They recognize that laws are indeed human that need to change with the times. They also see how laws, statutes, international agreements and treaties can become powerful instruments for advancing public good. The codification of human rights into a Universal Declaration in 1948 was an example of the power of liberal ideas.

Liberalism continues to evolve today. There are economic liberals, whose emphasis is on the freedom of the individual from state interference. Some of the American variations on this economic liberalism have become, in a sense, new forms of secular fundamentalism with its dogmatic phobia of state involvement. I worry that economic liberalism, in a country where feudalism remains powerful, becomes a way of excusing government from assuming many of its social responsibilities.

In Europe, liberalism evolved with a stronger sense of social responsibilities. "Social liberals" emphasize the rights of the individual but also recognize the state's role in helping to ensure those rights by providing quality social services, especially around education and health. Social liberals believe capitalism thrives best in a fair and level field, where people have equal opportunities. Social liberals, best exemplified by the Indian economist-thinker Amartya Sen, see human rights and economic development going hand in hand.

Fear of freedom

We need to be bolder in speaking not just about human rights but about the liberal tradition. Liberals have a tough time in the Philippines, with conservatives depicting liberals as "radicals" and radicals seeing liberals as "conservatives."

Often, the fear of liberalism, and liberal democracy, is a fear of freedom. Accustomed to the false security of authoritarian relationships, we are afraid of what liberalism might unleash in terms of rights. We forget that over the last two centuries, we have benefited from those "abstract" concepts called rights, and that it was liberalism that parented those rights. Even as a Spanish colony, the Philippines benefited from liberalism gaining a foothold in Spain, which led to some liberal Spanish governors-general in the Philippines. Our 19th-century heroes, from Rizal to Bonifacio, were also inspired by the ideals of European liberalism.

On a more personal level, we forget that independent thinking in schools and in homes, even being able to marry for love, is a fairly recent development in human history, and which came about with liberalism. In the not too distant past, the clan's elders decided whom one should marry, the future spouse chosen for economic and political reasons rather than this nonsensical thing called love. Liberalism created the space for individuals to think, and love, for themselves.

Liberalism, while Western in its origins, converges with many traditions and values in non-Western societies. We certainly had our sense of "*libertas*"—our precolonial social system had the *alipin*, not quite slaves but people bonded by debt and who could still work their way toward freedom, toward becoming *timawa* or free men and women with specific rights. There is much yet to learn from the West and from our own past, and as we uncover the many instances in history where those values converged, we might come to better appreciate rights and their vital liberal foundations.

The INQUIRER is a member of the
PHILIPPINE PRESS INSTITUTE
The National Association of Philippine Newspapers

Sermons against corruption

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

I BELIEVE THAT THE BISHOPS HAVE not done enough in attending to the morals of their flock. In the matter of illegal gambling, for example, I have never heard any one of them or their priests preaching to the faithful that engaging in illegal gambling is, in fact, engaging in the devil's work.

The same thing goes with bribery and extortion because these are works of evil as well. The problem is that the bishops sometimes even condone the poor's participation in illegal gambling, bribery, extortion and even stealing—after all, they are poor and deprived. To the middle class, the bishops do not preach the absolutes of honesty and integrity. Instead, the flock learn how to compromise because everybody else is supposed to be corrupt.

I have never heard a sermon about the hard-line view that the buck stops with "me," the individual. It is we, the individual citizens, who can squeeze corruption out of our system if only we refuse to give a bribe or to submit to petty and large-scale extortion. The problem is that our religious leaders have not emphasized enough to us that righteousness and eradicating corruption have also a "price." At times, this means falling in line in a government office; or waiting for the light to turn green before moving on; or losing a bid because you didn't bribe the officials who mattered.

Our people have to hear from the moral leaders, in very strong words that government corruption is evil; yes, that souls go to hell because of bribery, extortion and corruption. Anything short of those words will not do us any good because our people will not realize the urgency and gravity of the situation.

—GUS COSIO,
guscosio@yahoo.com

True appreciation of sea life cannot happen in shopping malls

WHAT'S MISSING FROM ALL THE hoopla about the opening of the Manila Ocean Park is the ethical question of removing 300 marine animals from their ocean homes and confining them to tanks for the rest of their lives. Shoppers may be momentarily distracted by these amazing fish and marine mammals, but the animals are paying with their freedom to satisfy our curiosity.

A true understanding and appreciation of sea life cannot come from looking at bored animals trapped in artificial enclosures. Officials brag about providing 12,000 cubic meters of habitat, but this is a tiny amount of space compared to the billions of cubic meters of ocean where these animals belong.

People will go to the new complex to shop and eat; no one will leave with a newfound respect for sea life. Open the gates, and let the animals go back home.

—JENNILYN TAGASA,
campaign coordinator,
People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals-Asia-Pacific,
JennilynT@PETAAsiaPacific.com

Complaint remained unacted upon by BFAD

I COULD HARDLY BELIEVE THAT BUreaucratic red tape and complacency still exist in government offices when it comes to complaints from ordinary citizens. Note that yearly awards are given by the Civil Service Commission to officials and employees for supposedly outstanding performance. We wonder if the selection process of outstanding government officials and employees satisfies the criteria set for the purpose, considering that some awardees had pending cases and could have been party to the defrauding of government.

Acting on my Jan. 25, 2007 letter-complaint against a milk manufacturing company, Prof. Leticia Barbara B. Gutierrez, director of the Bureau of Food and Drugs, in her Feb. 26, 2007 first endorsement, instructed Director Nestor F. Santiago Jr. of the Center for Health Development 5, Legazpi City, to investigate my complaint. Instead, he created a team of three women employees whom he directed to see me on April 26, 2007. But Evangelina T. Lozada, head of the team, merely asked me if I wanted a dialogue with the milk manufacturer, an offer which I rejected.

However, I reiterated my request that an investigation be conducted on the quality control system of the milk manufacturer in connection with my complaints.

Seven months thereafter, and almost a year since I called the attention of the company (through letters, the first, on Nov. 10, 2006; and the second, on Dec. 27, 2006) after finding celluloid and dirt inside its canned milk products, nothing has been heard from them and no copy of the results of the investigation has been given to me.

The director for corporate affairs, Santiago A. Polido, in his letter of Nov. 21, 2006, said he referred my letter-complaint to the company's vice president for operations at its San Pedro (Laguna) plant, for investigation. Did my complaint die a natural death? Or is the government afraid to investigate the corporation?

—GODOFREDO O. PETEZA SR.,
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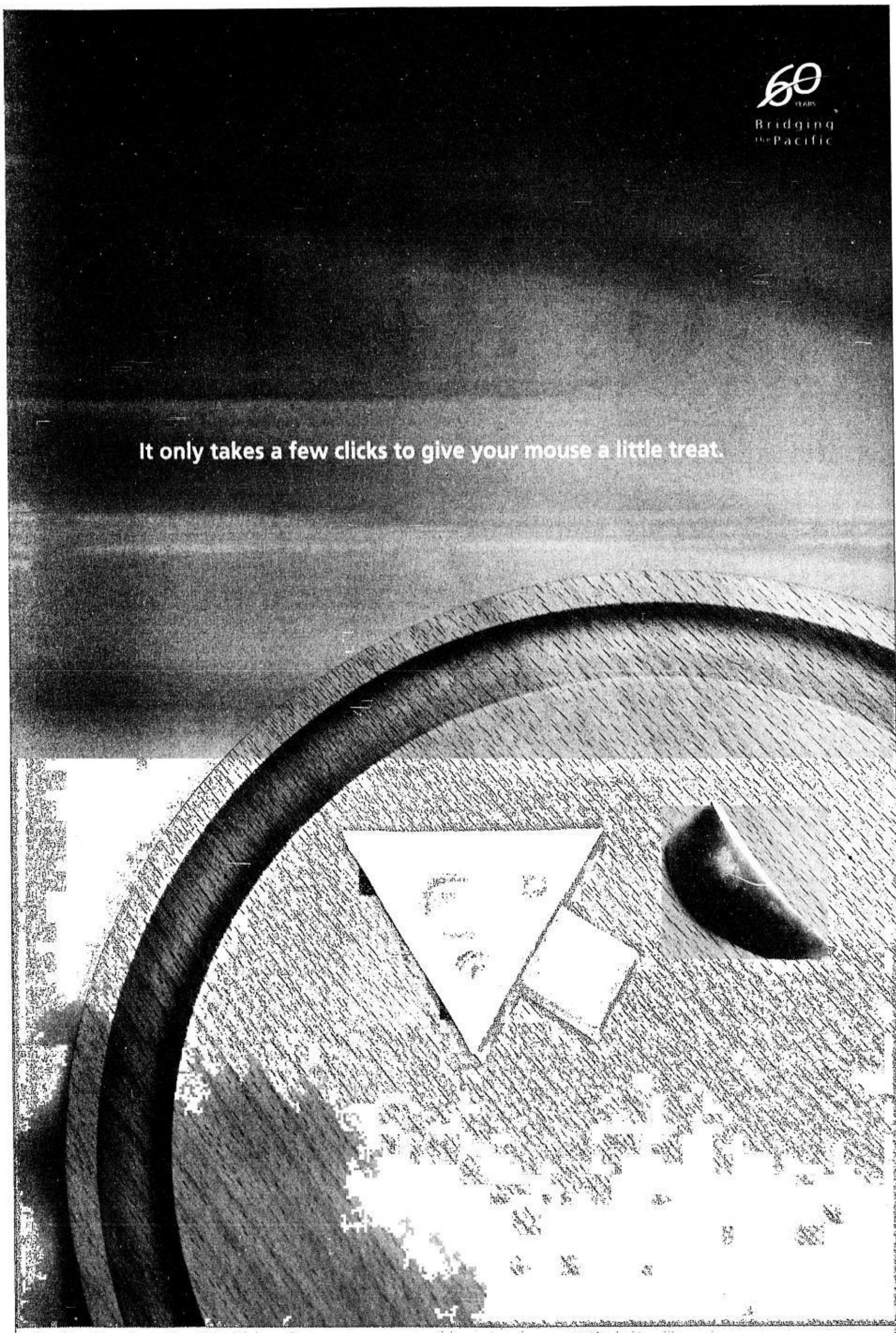
Daet, Camarines Norte 4600



Blind to reigning anarchy

TO QUOTE FLORENCIO A. DE LOYOLA, "THE demand for the resignation of President Arroyo at this time is a call for uncertainty, ambiguity, anarchy and mob rule; a call for the discontinuation of the good things achieved in the fields of economy and international diplomacy." (INQUIRER, 11/23/07)

That's a mouthful of s—t, whether in Germany or even in Oklahoma. Uncertainty was—as in the calculated "constructive resignation"—concocted by Jaime Cardinal Sin and by then Chief Justice Hilario Davide, et al. when they unseated the legitimately elected President Joseph Estrada to anoint Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

Surety is worse than the "Marcosian style" rule of the illegitimate Palace occupant. Marcos, at least, was twice elected by the people. Surety is the anarchy under this regime that implements selectively the laws under circumstances of inconvenient truth.

And what good things have been achieved in the field of economy that (1) Adds to the ranks of the poor the overseas Filipino workers who see the value of their dollars reduced by almost 20 percent—from $1:P50 to $1:P42, during periods of rising prices? (2) Enlarges the gap between the have's and the have-not's? And what good things have been achieved in international diplomacy where the Philippines is globally perceived (1) To be in flagrant violation of human rights? (2) To be tops among the most corrupt nations in Asia and around the world?

If those demanding the resignation are called myopic, then, those who cannot see the present anarchy are either blind or numb or in a coma or in a vegetative state.

—AURORA RIEL,
aurora_riel@yahoo.com

'Rape analogy' in bad taste

THIS IS IN REACTION TO A.M. TAYO'S LETter, which appeared in the Nov. 20 issue of the INQUIRER. Tayo may know something about Conrado de Quiros' writing but he knows little about rape.

Tayo wrote in part, "the better to fully savor the pleasure of being raped." There is no pleasure in being raped. Rape is always a crime, whether or not it is treated as such by a legal system. Tayo simply leaned on an ancient untruth that is commonly held in that part of Philippine culture, or any culture, which deifies "machismo." Many men here are very casual about the rape of women, so much so that women, too, are conditioned to downplay its horror.

Rape is done by men who are threatened by women. The criminal rapes a woman to feel power and control over a woman. A rapist doesn't necessarily rape the woman who threatens him. A rapist accosts a woman who he trusts cannot physically fend him off. Rape is always a cowardly crime.

A woman being raped is like a man being forcibly sodomized. Has Tayo ever heard of a man who "savors the pleasure of being" forcibly sodomized?

—EUGÉNIE DE ROSIER,
a US citizen in Luzon,
Iba, Zambales

Monsod's 'return' hailed

THIS IS IN REACTION TO SOLITA MONSOD'S column titled "The harshest criticism against GSIS." (INQUIRER, 11/9/07) For a while I thought we've lost the ember keeping alive our crusade against Winston Garcia. After the report came out regarding the meeting Garcia had with INQUIRER columnists, there was a deafening silence on GSIS issues. (*To be fair with Monsod, we would like to clarify that the meeting was held on Aug. 30, 2007. Rowena Therese Gracia must have missed Monsod's Sept. 1 column.*—Ed.)

As a dismissed employee with an experience of three years (and still counting) of non-stop struggle against his oppressive policies and administration, the abrupt silence after a dialogue with Garcia was a very familiar "refrain" we have "heard more than many times." And each time we do, it feels like death.

I mean no ill feelings to the professor. As a matter of fact, I wish to thank her for taking a share of our burden in the government service. Truly, her courage and tireless efforts are admirable. Other writers should learn from her a lesson or two about fearless journalism.

—ROWENA THERESE GRACIA,
rtbg17@yahoo.com

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Drafts of pact with MILF prepared

COTABATO CITY—GOVernment and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) negotiators have already drafted a final peace agreement that could be signed next year, a source privy to the peace talks told the INQUIRER.

The source, who requested anonymity for lack of clearance to talk on the subject, yesterday said the draft could be finalized after the negotiating panels meet for the last round of the exploratory talks in Kuala Lumpur in February.

Gadhafi son

The drafting of the pact could be a sign that the two sides were a step away from entering into an agreement. Another was the expected arrival of the son of Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi to help unify the MILF and its rival group, the Moro National Liberation Front.

According to the source, the draft agreement provides for the expansion of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao to cover Muslim-dominated villages in Central and Western Mindanao.

A law would be passed to repeal Republic Acts 6734 and 9054 that would result in the dissolution of the existing ARMM.

RA 6734 created the ARMM in 1989 and RA 9054 expanded its coverage from four to 14 provinces in 2001. RA 9054 was rejected in a plebiscite.

The new region would be called the Bangsamoro Juridical Entity (BJE). Its creation would be subject to a plebiscite in 623 Muslim villages outside of the current ARMM.

2 drafts

Prof. Abhoud Syed Lingga, executive director of the Institute for Bangsamoro Studies, confirmed the existence of the draft peace agreement, but said there were two drafts, not one.

Eid Kabalu, MILF's civil-military affairs chief, confirmed Lingga's statement but declined to reveal the contents of the MILF draft.

"We have the draft but I can't tell it to you so as not to preempt the talks, it's only between the panels," Kabalu said.

Jesus Dureza, presidential adviser on the peace process, denied the existence of any draft peace agreement.

He said both panels are not yet done with the issue of ancestral domain.

Mohagher Iqbal, MILF chief negotiator, also denied the existence of any draft peace agreement.

"How come? We are not even done with the ancestral domain," he said.

Seif el-Islam Gadhafi, the president of the Gadhafi International Foundation for Charity Associations, will arrive today for meetings with the MILF, MNLF and President Macapagal-Arroyo. *Nash Maulana and Jeoffrey Maitem, Inquirer Mindanao with reports from Tarra Quismundo and AP*

MIST
A water fountain in the middle of Burnham Lake in Baguio City provides another attraction for Baguio visitors. ELMER KRISTIAN DAUIGOY

Panay drivers ready for transport strike

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—TRANSPORT groups in three provinces on Panay Island seek to paralyze public transport for two days starting Wednesday to dramatize their protest against repeated oil price increases.

Jeepney and tricyle drivers in Iloilo and Aklan will stop plying their routes starting midnight Wednesday until midnight Friday while transport groups in Capiz will hold their one-day strike starting midnight Thursday.

Edgar Salarda, president of the Pinag-isang Samahan ng mga Tsuper at Operator Nationwide (Piston-Iloilo), said 22 jeepney operators and drivers' associations under the Iloilo City Alliance of Drivers Associations would join the strike.

Transport associations plying routes between the city and towns of Iloilo will also join the protest action.

Salarda said public utility jeeps, vans and tricycles would stop plying their routes in the island-province of Guimaras.

The transport groups are calling for the repeal of Republic Act 8479, or the Oil Deregulation Law, which they blamed for the continued increase of oil prices. They also called for the removal of the value-added tax levied on petroleum products.

Iloilo City Mayor Jerry Treñas belittled the strike, saying he did not expect public transport in the city to be crippled because some transport groups announced that they will not join the protest action.

Groups point at GMA for Mindanao abuses

COTABATO CITY—TWO MORO militant groups yesterday said there was no need to look far to see the human rights violations committed by the Arroyo administration.

In a statement, Suara Bangsamoro and Kawagib said the situation in Basilan and Sulu, and other parts of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), were enough evidence of how the rights of the Moro people were being violated by the government.

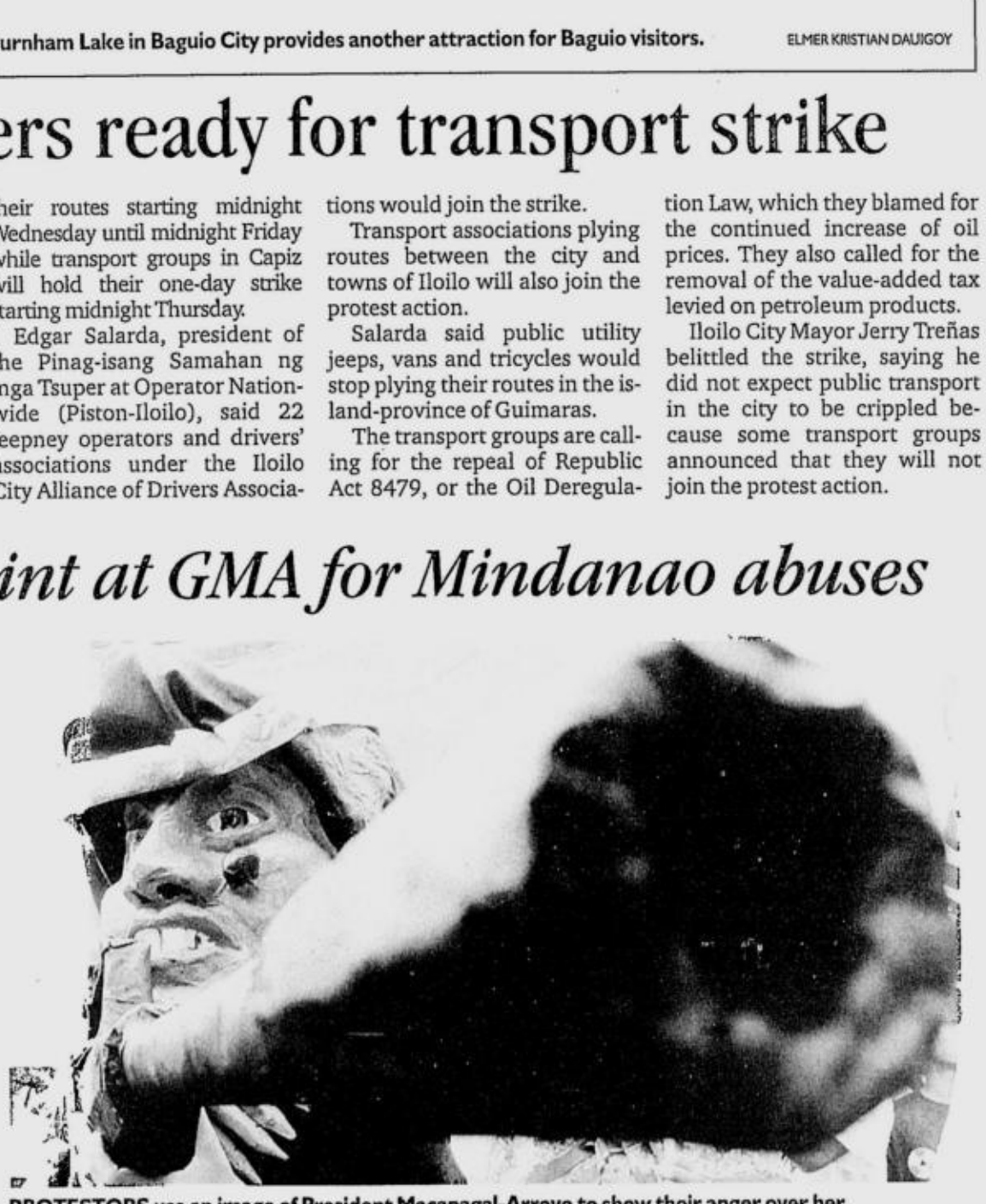
The two Moro human rights groups said the police and the military target Moro communities in their antiterror campaign.

And in every operation, Moros are tagged as terror or bomb suspects, they said.

They also pointed to warrantless arrests, abductions, torture and attacks on civilian homes by state agents, which resulted in massive evacuation of residents.

Kawagib said from January to November this year, the Arroyo administration has committed 21 cases of human rights violations in the ARMM and some parts of Central Mindanao.

It did not give specifics but added that it already submitted a report to the United Nations Human Rights Commission.



PROTESTORS use an image of President Macapagal-Arroyo to show their anger over her administration's alleged human rights violations in a Quezon City rally. RYAN LIM

Bai Ali Indayla, Suara Bangsamoro national secretary general, said the rights of over 75,000 Moro civilians in Basilan, Sulu and in Midsayap, North Cotabato were also violated when they were displaced by military operations.

Indayla said the hardest hit by the government's policy of militarization was Sulu when government troops staged "indiscriminate aerial bombings against the groups of Khaid Ajibun and Habier Malik of the Moro National Liberation Front."

She said at least 58,500 villagers were displaced in the operation and their rights to peaceful existence violated. *Charlie Señase, Inquirer Mindanao*

SCTEx toll seen to start at ₱2.49/km

CLARK FREEPORT—MOTORISTS will likely pay at least P2.49 per kilometer for using the 94-km Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway when it opens in March 2008, an official of the Bases Conversion Development Authority (BCDA) said.

Isaac Puno III, BCDA executive vice president, said the amount had to be finalized as the BCDA had yet to conclude negotiations with the Toll Regulatory Board.

Robert Gervacio, SCTEx program manager for operational support, said the P2.49-per-kilometer rate was among the figures that came up during the computation.

"That rate is likely because we have considered all factors. like traffic volume, extent of road and the loan's repayment commitment. Then also, the Subic-Clark route is a missionary route in the meantime because of less traffic expected there," Gervacio said.

Flagship project

BCDA officials briefed reporters on Monday on the status of the SCTEx, a national flagship project of the Arroyo administration.

The government obtained a P23.06-billion loan from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) to build the four-lane road linking the Subic Bay Freeport, Clark Freeport and the Luisita Industrial Park.

The BCDA, the project proponent, put in P4 billion as counterpart to buy lands for the road and to cover project management expenses, contingencies, taxes and duties, according to a report.

Bidding for a permanent toll manager and operator will be done before the middle of next year, Puno said.

For the first six months, the joint venture of First Philippine Holdings Corp., Egis Road Operation and Tollways Management Corp. will operate the toll way.

The BCDA selected the venture after two biddings failed as proposals surpassed the agency's ceiling.

Demand dropped

Eduardo Lena, SCTEx program manager for engineering and construction, said the Japanese contractor of the Subic-Clark segment had stopped demanding the P500 million in "acceleration cost."

This happened after the 457-day extension to the Hazama-Taisei-Nippon Steel (HTN) Joint Venture, the contractor of the Clark-Tarlac segment, was trimmed to 140 days. It was supposed to finish that section in August.

"Using their submitted data, their extension time was only 140 days," Lena said. He said payment was due to HTN.

"It's a legitimate claim of HTN. It has to be paid by the BCDA in support of the requirements set by the consultants," he said.

HTN, he said, agreed to recover only "overhead contingency and miscellaneous cost." This cannot be immediately confirmed with HTN officials. *Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon*

Gov't deficit seen behind E. Visayas poor growth

TACLOBAN CITY—EASTERN Visayas has failed to reach its 6.9-percent growth target for 2005 to 2007, a National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) official said.

"It may be sad to note that while we wanted a 6.9-percent growth rate in the first three years (2005-2007), what we only achieved was 4.4 (percent)," said Neda regional director Buenaventura Gosoco Jr.

Gosoco attributed the region's low growth rate to the "budget deficit of the national government in 2005-2007, resulting in slow government spending."

Low spending

He said government spending accounts for much of the region's gross regional domestic product (GRDP).

Low government spending has led to a decline in the growth rate "when we were hoping that it would be an increase in those years," Gosoco said.

The unexpected maintenance shutdown of the Philippine Associated Smelting and Amalgamated Refinery (Pasar) plant in Isabel, Leyte in late 2005 also had an adverse effect on the growth of the industry sector that year, he said.

Gosoco said the industry sector registered fluctuating growth rates in the past three years, from a "7.3 percent growth in 2004 to almost zero growth in 2005 and 6.6 percent in 2006."

"But this year we already recovered," Gosoco said.

Revised figures

Economic and development planners in Eastern Visayas had revised the regional development plan and lowered their growth target to 6.6 percent in 2010.

Gosoco said the region missed its previous goal because of unavoidable circumstances, adding that the target for 2008-2010 is doable.

He said the updated regional development plan, which was approved by the Regional Development Council early this month, would focus on sustainable productivity and competitiveness in the agriculture and industrial sectors.

Gosoco said the RDC had revised the regional development plan, mainly to include projects that were not in the development plan for 2005-2007.

"The revision was necessary because there were many new initiatives that came out in 2005, in 2006 and this year," Gosoco said.

The government has prided itself with growth rates of more than 6 percent in recent months, but critics of President Macapagal-Arroyo pointed to the growing debt of her administration as proof of her failure to manage the economy well.

Revenue targets also have not been met by the customs and internal revenue bureaus. *Ven Labro, Inquirer Visayas*

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INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Rolando B. Fernandez

Hail to Pampanga's 'duman' makers

VERONICA Salazar, 72, one of the pioneer "duman" makers in Sta. Rita, Pampanga, ensures that the native delicacy will be enjoyed by generations to come. TONETTE T. OREJAS

By Tonette Orejas
Sta. Rita, Pampanga

REST WAS NOT FOR 72-YEAR-OLD VERONICA Salazar on the night of Dec. 1. As the minutes ticked by, her wrinkled hands scooped "*duman*" into a wooden square box ("*saluk*"), an heirloom as old as hers.

But Apong Boning, as Salazar is called in Sta. Rita, Pampanga, would not be rushed even as buyers queued.

Gently, she poured the green, sweet and crispy cereal in a flat sheet of aluminum foil until she got the measurement right. The pitted grains went by the *saluk* (one-fourth of a kilogram) or by the *pati* (kilogram).

She wrapped the *duman* even more gently, dishing a wide, unpretentious smile as she handed the native delicacy to one buyer.

In the un-hurriedness of it all, she gave out an advice. "You can stock that in your refrigerator for weeks. *Duman* tastes good in milk or cocoa," she told the woman, who confessed that American fare—hamburgers and fries—commonly made up for her snacks.

By 10 p.m., Salazar's specialty was almost sold out. Her *igu* (bamboo basket), filled to the lid three hours ago, was now good enough for only a *pati*.

Her milieu that night was different. Salazar and her diminishing breed of *magduruman* (*duman* makers) in Sta. Rita showcased and sold the delicacy amid a musical concert by the ArtiSta. Rita and a fair of native food.

It is for all of these gritty rural folk and all the cultural values that go with their making of the *duman* that the 6th Duman Festival is held, said Recy Pineda, that night's host.

The event's organizer, ArtiSta. Rita Foundation Inc., made sure that the façade of the centuries-old Sta. Rita de Casia parish church shimmered with Christmas lights this time around.

"This is our tribute to our farmers who, in making the *duman*, continue to practice hard work and cooperation, virtues that define our people and give life to our communities and town," Pineda told some 5,000 people who crammed the church grounds.

Gov. Eddie Panlilio joined the tribute, the first Pampanga chief executive to do so. For the *duman* makers, he sang "Siuala (The Voice)."

"Let us be inspired by our *duman* makers. Let's live by hard work and work together to bring progress to our families and communities," Panlilio, a Catholic priest, said during the concert.

Living tradition

The *duman* makers have sustained the tradition that Mt. Pinatubo's eruptions in 1991 and the series of lahar attacks threatened to wipe out then. Sixteen years after that disaster, farmers continue to grow the glutinous rice in lands revived by hard toil.

Amyam—amihan to the Tagalog or northeast monsoon season to climate watchers—signals the start of *duman* making.

Cold nights see the men and women gather at the *sulip* (space below the house) or backyards of *duman* makers to contribute their labor to the cooking of the town's specialty. In teams of four, they take turns pounding the grains by their wooden mortars and pestles.

In this tedious, 12-hour production process, it is said that romance blooms, quarrels are patched up, peace is maintained, and cooperation is strengthened among rural folk.

Salazar swore that up to now, no one resorts to "shortcuts" in the making of the *duman*. The old way of cooking it is retained so that the same taste, texture and color produced decades ago are preserved.

"The *duman* that you eat now is what our elders made many years ago," she said, stressing the privilege of younger generations in enjoying this gift of a living tradition.

Many Kapampangans abroad have not outgrown the *duman*, ordering this year-round from their relatives back home, Salazar said.

The festival has been staged annually since 2001, done for free by the ArtiSta. Rita Foundation Inc. and its ensemble of 50 young and old musical artists to be able to express "pride of place and people," said Andy Alviz, the foundation's artistic director.

The lively song "Duman," composed and arranged by Pineda, hails the town's *duman* makers.

The group had been conferred the Gawad Alab ng Haraya Award by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts early this year for reviving Kapampangan folk songs and creating new compositions.

In May 2008, the group will perform for Kapampangan communities in four cities in the United States.

"There's so much to be proud about in local culture. Our *duman* makers, for one, teach us good values that help us survive the modern world," Alviz said.

Igorot priest now leads nat'l church council

By Maurice Malanes
Baguio City

IT WON'T BE SURPRISING IF AN ANGLICAN PRIEST, who is the first indigenous person to be elected general secretary of a national organization of mainline Protestant churches, pushes for the integration of indigenous culture into Christian values and ethics.

"I will definitely strengthen the program on indigenous peoples, not because I am indigenous person myself, but because the churches can also learn a lot from indigenous peoples' sense of justice, community and stewardship of creation," said Rev. Fr. Rex Reyes Jr., 48, a native of Sagada, Mt. Province, and the new general secretary of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines.

Formed in 1963, the NCCP groups 10 churches, which are committed to unity and service, human rights and social justice: Apostolic Catholic Church (which is different from the Roman Catholic Church), Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches, Episcopal Church in the Philippines, Iglesia Evangelica Metodista en las Islas Filipinas, Iglesia Filipina Independiente, Iglesia Unida Ekyumenikal, Lutheran Church in the Philippines, Salvation Army, United Church of Christ in the Philippines, and United Methodist Church.

"As Christians, we have to affirm all that is good in the culture of our indigenous communities," Reyes said. "We can affirm, for example, the strong sense of community and culture of sharing of indigenous peoples as our safeguard against the individualist and consumerist values being pushed by capitalist globalization."

Grabbing headlines

Reyes, a priest from the Episcopal Church in the Philippines (ECP) assigned as rector of the Fairview Episcopal Resurrection Church in Quezon City, is the program secretary of the NCCP's Christian Unity and Ecumenical Relations program. He is the 7th general secretary of the 44-year-old NCCP.

Reyes said he would sustain the imaginative and innovative work of his predecessor, who "blazed trails in the NCCP's commitment to the pursuit of peace and justice."

Under the leadership of theologian Sharon Rose Joy Ruiz-Duremdes, the first woman general secretary, the NCCP for the past eight years has made a mark in human rights and peace ministry.

It grabbed the headlines in March when it released a human rights report and formed a delegation called the "Ecumenical Voice" to air the issue of extrajudicial killings of activists, church workers and journalists, and other human rights violations in the international arena.

These efforts culminated in an unprecedented US Senate hearing called by Sen. Barbara Boxer to look into the issue.

As a result, the American government pledged that it would review its military aid to the Philippines because the aid, as human rights advocates say, might be used to help perpetrate extrajudicial killings and other human rights violations.

On Nov. 16, the National Christian Council of Churches in the USA and the Church World Service presented an award of excellence to the NCCP for its "outstanding work in the areas of human rights protection and human rights advocacy in the Philippines." It was the first time the award was given to a group outside the United States.

Reyes vowed to continue and strengthen the work of his predecessor. But he said he would also integrate a ministry and program seeking to "give voice" to some 15 million indigenous peoples in the country.

Indigenous peoples continue to be deprived of their lands and resources, he said, because of the onslaught of big local and transnational companies, such as those involved in large-scale mining and plantation farms, and of big government development projects, such as dams.

He said he would help push the resumption of peace talks between the government and the communist-led National Democratic Front and between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

To do this, he said, he would collaborate with other religious groups, such as the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches, Ecumenical Bishops Forum, and the Bishops-Ulama Conference, all of which, he noted, are committed to peace.

NEWSBRIEFS

Rail link urged

NAGA CITY—The new head of the Philippine National Railways is pushing for commuter train operations between Camarines Sur and Albay.

Ower Andal, PNR chair, said key to the operation of the first commuter train outside Metro Manila was to build the bridge washed out by Supertyphoon "Reming" in Travesia, Albay.

To cost at least P170 million, the bridge will connect the Legazpi City terminal, the end of the south railway system, to the terminal in Del Gallego, the Bicol town in the boundary of Quezon province, added Andal.

The south railway system has been non-operational after a PNR train was derailed in Barangay Duhat, Padre Burgos, Quezon on Nov. 12, 2004, leaving 12 persons dead and scores injured.

Juan Escandor Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

Shabu ingredient seized

BALANGA CITY—A former Sangguniang Kabataan official in Abucay, Bataan, was arrested after police seized at least 21 kilograms of ephedrine, an ingredient in the manufacture of the illegal drug shabu (metamphetamine hydrochloride), in his house Dec. 7.

Police said Emerson Ebido, 31, former SK chair of Calaylayan in Abucay, was arrested after agents found four jute sacks containing ephedrine in a raid.

Chief Supt. Errol Pan, Central Luzon police director, said policemen and PDEA agents searched the house on the basis of a warrant issued by a local court on Dec. 3.

Supt. Odelon Ramoneda, Bataan police director, said the value of the confiscated ephedrine, when produced into shabu, would reach more than P3 million.

Greg Refraccion with a report from Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon

Suspension enforced

NAGA CITY—The Sandiganbayan Fifth Division has ordered the Secretary of the Department of Interior and Local Government to implement a court resolution dated April 26, 2004 that suspended Bula town mayor Benjamin Decena for 90 days.

In a resolution Nov. 19, 2007, the Sandiganbayan gave weight to the argument of the prosecution that even as Decena lost in the 2004 elections, his protest was sustained by a court and that, when he regained his position as mayor on May 10, 2007, the suspension order became enforceable again.

Decena was suspended over the operations of a cockpit in the town.

Juan Escandor Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

Gunmen kill councilor

TAGUM CITY—Motorcycle-riding men shot and killed a town councilor in Patukan, Compostela Valley on Dec. 7.

Police identified the victim as councilor Roberto Acedillo of Pantukan town.

Acedello, 50, was on board his jeep and was traveling along Caballero Street in Barangay Kingking at around 6:30 p.m. when the suspects pulled up beside him and shot him at close range.

Frinston Lim, Inquirer Mindanao

58 mourners poisoned

CEBU CITY—Fifty-eight people who were about to attend the burial of a neighbor in Barangay Buhisan this city were downed by food poisoning.

All of the victims were to attend the afternoon burial but started getting ill after they ate lunch served by the family of the departed.

Dr. Myrna Go, medical director of the Cebu City Medical Center (CCMC), said all the victims were in stable condition but remained under observation at the hospital.

Go said the patients were given intravenous fluids at the hospital and remained confined at the CCMC.

Go said the patients started arriving at the hospital at noon. "First there were six and then 30 ... 40. Now they numbered 58," Go said.

Go said the patients ate pork and noodles for lunch.

Jhunnex Napallacan, Inquirer Visayas

American held for theft

DIGOS CITY—An American national married to a Filipino was arrested here on charges of theft, police said Sunday.

But John Daniel Herron Jr., who lives on Bonifacio 8th Street here, insisted he was innocent.

Herron was sued by lawyer Dominador Carrillo for allegedly stealing chairs from the house he previously rented out to the American national.

Herron denied the charges adding these were trumped up. He said he had a quarrel with the lawyer's wife before he transferred to another house a few weeks ago.

SPO2 Esdraz Delos Santos, city police investigator, said Herron's arrest was backed by a warrant. He said aside from theft, Herron also faces an estafa case for refusing to pay the electric bills he incurred while living at the Carrillo house.

Orlando Dinoy, Inquirer Mindanao

Sayyaf member captured

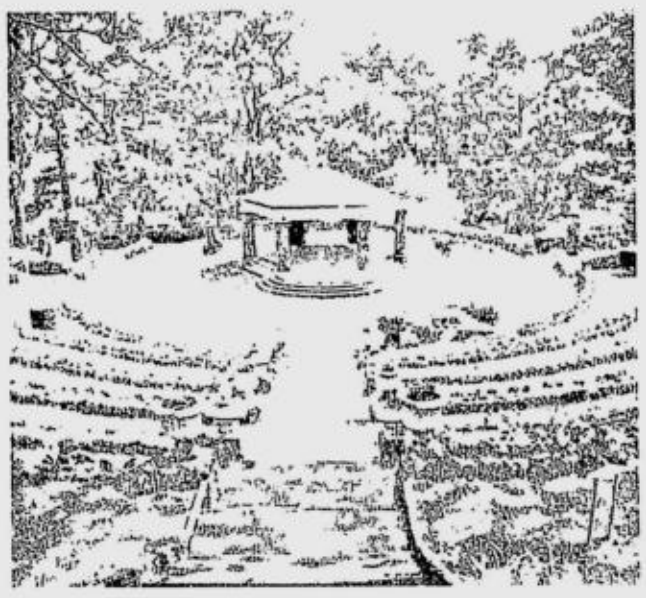
ZAMBOANGA CITY—An alleged Abu Sayyaf member, linked to the 2001 kidnapping of American missionary Martin Burnham and his wife Gracia, and several other persons, was captured by authorities here on Dec. 10.

City police chief Senior Supt. Manuel Barcena said Adel Kamala, alias Abu Moadz and Boy Sniper, was arrested along Corcuerra Street here around 4:30 p.m.

Barcena said Kamala was one of those convicted in absentia for the Dos Palmas kidnapping and also faces charges for the Lamitan siege of June 2, 2001.

Julie Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao

Camp John Hay debts reach P2.5B



THE BELL Amphitheater is among the American landmarks preserved inside the Camp John Hay in Baguio City. ELIZABETH LOLARGA/CONTRIBUTOR

BAGUIO CITY—PLANS TO maximize government revenues from Camp John Hay now include the lease of its forest lands to businesses that cater to ecotourism, Mayor Reinaldo Bautista Jr. said on Monday.

But Bautista said the city government wants a role in drawing up these projects for the former American rest and recreation center because the Bases Conversion Development Authority (BCDA) has failed to address its John Hay project's accumulating debts, now about P2.5 billion.

The Fil Estate-owned Camp John Hay Development Corp. (CJHDevco) won the lease in 1996 and has established Camp John Hay as a leisure resort since.

But it suspended payments when the Supreme Court ruled that the 301-hectare Camp John Hay Special Economic Zone did not have the legal mandate to offer tax privileges to its locators when it was created in 1994.

Congress has corrected this flaw in Republic Act 7227 (the BCDA law) through an amendment measure passed this year.

But lawyer Georgina Alvarez, CJHDevco senior vice president, said back channel talks with BCDA are still ongoing to determine where the firm now stands in its lease arrangements with government.

CJHDevco had sued government before an arbitration court for P10 billion in lost profits because of the Supreme Court ruling.

The city government has staked almost P800 million of the CJHDevco debts, as part of its 25-percent share from Camp John Hay's development.

CJHDevco's debts have increased Baguio's uncollected revenues as 2007 winds up, Bautista said.

He said he and Rep. Mauricio Domogan have started reviewing the progress of talks on the CJHDevco's outstanding rent as well as the new lease arrangements that BCDA was preparing for undeveloped sections of Camp John Hay.

Sections of the John Hay forest are now up for lease as a result of these talks, Bautista said, "but as a new type of resort."

A director of the John Hay Management Corp. (JHMC), BCDA's estate manager here, confirmed that among the plans for John Hay is to bid out portions of the undeveloped forests. *Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

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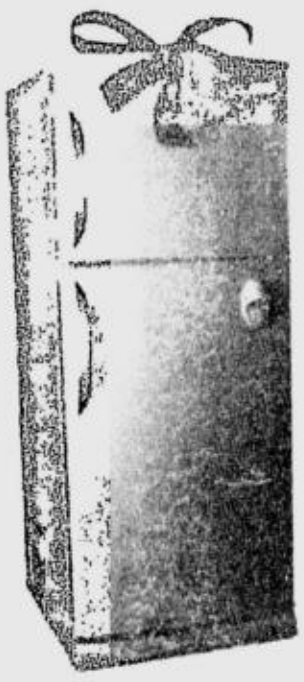

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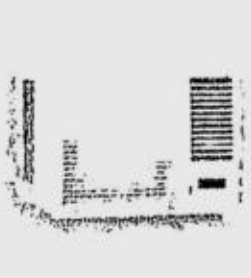

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THANKS: President Arroyo receives the grateful family of Marilou Ranario, the OFW in Kuwait she saved from the gallows when she personally travelled to that country to ask the emir to spare her life. From left are Ranario's sister Wilfreda, daughter Roselle, son Rafy John, mother Encarnacion and father Rosario. EDWIN BACASMAS

Top ARMM cop gets ultimatum: Get Bedol by Dec. 31, or else...

By Beverly T. Natividad and Alcuin Papa

THE POLICE CHIEF OF THE AUTONOMOUS Region in Muslim Mindanao has until Dec. 31 to arrest Lintang Bedol, the wanted election supervisor of Maguindanao.

The Commission on Elections yesterday issued the deadline to Chief Supt. Joel Goltiao, saying he ran the risk of losing his job if he did not bag Bedol by the end of the year.

Bedol, notorious for his defiance of summonses to show up at the Comelec, has yet to explain his claim that he had lost crucial documents containing the results of the May senatorial elections in Maguindanao.

A warrant for Bedol's arrest was issued on Oct. 23 on the strength of the Comelec ruling in August that found him guilty of indirect contempt.

His conviction was based on, among other things, his failure to appear before the Comelec despite repeated summonses to answer questions on alleged election cheating in Maguindanao.

Resurreccion Borra, acting Comelec chair, said the poll body would recommend Goltiao's relief to Philippine National Police Director General Avelino Razon should the deadline lapse with Bedol still at large.

"If there is still no arrest by Dec. 31, we will recommend that he be replaced by someone who has the capacity to arrest Bedol," Borra said yesterday at a press conference.

No title to post

He said he and the other election commissioners had directed Goltiao to submit by next week a specific plan of action on Bedol's arrest.

Goltiao did not balk at the imposed deadline, saying he was "prepared to be relieved" if he did not deliver. "We have no torrens title to our position," he told reporters.

Razon himself said the police force would try its best to find the fugitive.

"We will exert all efforts to locate Attorney Bedol and bring him to the Comelec. We are confident we can meet the deadline," Razon told reporters.

The PNP chief was quick to clear Goltiao of negligence, saying the man had exerted all efforts to locate Bedol.

"I understand the situation," Razon said, adding that Bedol could have been arrested had he been in the ARMM.

Razon also said failure to arrest the fugitive would not mean Goltiao's relief—unless "he sat beside Bedol but did not nab him."

On Oct. 30, Goltiao and his men tried to serve the arrest warrant on Bedol at the latter's residence in Cotabato City. But the election official was not there.

The arresting team was told that Bedol had left his house with unidentified companions two days earlier.

The warrant was subsequently returned to the Comelec.

Intelligence work

Goltiao appeared before the Comelec en banc yesterday at its central office in Manila to explain his failure to arrest Bedol.

Asked why Bedol was still at large almost two months after the issuance of the arrest warrant, he said the ARMM police had yet to complete intelligence work on the case.

"Perhaps we needed more time to do our intelligence report. It is hard to put a deadline on arresting wanted persons," he said.

The Comelec had summoned Goltiao to its Manila office to ask him to "explain what further steps he has taken" in response to its Oct. 30 resolution demanding his immediate implementation of Bedol's arrest under pain of contempt.

Goltiao said that after eluding arrest for almost two months, the fugitive was now suspected to have fled to other regions in Mindanao.

He said ARMM police had coordinated the search with their counterparts in the Zamboanga Peninsula, Northern Mindanao, Davao region and Socksargen.

According to Razon, all police regional directors in areas around the ARMM had been instructed to search for Bedol.

Borra also said the Bureau of Immigration had issued a hold-departure order to prevent the fugitive from slipping out of the country.

50-man hunting party

In an earlier interview, Goltiao said he had formed a task force composed of members of the ARMM intelligence group, the Regional Mobile Group and the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group to hunt Bedol down.

He said around 50 men composed the hunting party.

Goltiao also said the search for Bedol was not terminated despite the return of the warrant to the Comelec. He said that if Bedol was in the ARMM, police would have already found him.

IMF upgrades ...

From page A1

the Philippine economy expanded by a robust 7.1 percent, higher than the 6-percent average growth for Southeast Asia's five biggest economies.

"Based on the momentum through the year, the mission has raised its growth forecast to 6.7 percent for 2007 from 6.3 percent previously and to 6.0 percent for 2008 from 5.8 percent previously," the IMF said in a statement.

The slower growth projected for the Philippines next year was in line with expectations of a global economic slowdown as a result of rising oil prices and the prolonged credit crunch in the United States that, in turn, could weigh heavily on Asian exports.

Progress in control of deficit

IMF Deputy Director Masahiko Taheda also noted the government's progress in controlling the budget deficit and selling state assets.

The IMF said the government would "comfortably" meet its target of bringing the 2007 budget deficit within P63 billion this year, but cited the need to reverse weak tax collections.

It said strong interest in the government's privatization program had led to an increase in revenues and helped reduce the deficit ahead of schedule although tax reform, and legislative support for such reform, was needed.

"Two important areas of reform would be to rationalize fiscal incentives and adjust the excise rate on tobacco and alcohol products and index it to inflation," the IMF said.

The IMF is pushing for the phaseout of income tax holidays and the reduction of effective tax rates.

"Making decisive progress on the ongoing tax administration reform program and legislative support for revenue enhancement measures will be needed," the mission said.

It said the strengthening of the peso, which has gained more than 18 percent against the dollar this year, allowed an opportunity to prepay external debt and reduce foreign borrowing.

"This would reduce the economy's exposure to exchange rate risk in case of intensified risk aversion," the IMF said. ***With a report from Reuters***

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GMA most corrupt President, says Pulse Asia

From page A1

their respective administrations.

Estrada was convicted of plunder in September but was pardoned by Ms Arroyo the following month.

Last night, Ms Arroyo insisted that her administration was doing something to stamp out corruption, which she said "sucks the lifeblood of our system."

"As experience has shown, it won't be eliminated overnight, but I assure you that progress has been made," she said in a speech at the Centennial Anniversary of the Philippine Columbian Association at its clubhouse in Paco, Manila.

In your opinion, which president is the MOST CORRUPT in the history of the Philippines	%
Gloria "GMA" Macapagal-Arroyo	42
Ferdinand Marcos	35
Joseph "Erap" Estrada	16
Fidel "FVR" V. Ramos	5
Corazon "Cory" Aquino	1
None/Refused/Can't Say	2

In your opinion, under which administration has there been the most intense allegations of corruption?	%
Arroyo Administration	45
Marcos Administration	31
Estrada Administration	14
Ramos Administration	7
Aquino Administration	1
None/Refused/Can't Say	1

In your opinion, which president is the LEAST CORRUPT OR NOT CORRUPT in the history of the Philippines?	%
Corazon "Cory" Aquino	66
Joseph "Erap" Estrada	11
Ferdinand Marcos	9
Fidel "FVR" Ramos	6
Gloria "GMA" Macapagal-Arroyo	5
None/Refused/Can't Say	3

Source: October 20-31, 2007 Survey. Pulse Asia Inc.

Perception clouds reality

Ms Arroyo said Tony Kwok, who the government hired to help address corruption in the country, "believes perception clouds the reality [of] our progress... in reducing corruption and red tape."

Kwok is a former deputy commissioner of Hong Kong's Independent Commission Against Corruption, which has succeeded in curbing corruption in the former British colony.

"But the fact is we are undertaking a strong and steady effort to curb graft through criminal justice, administrative controls and procedural reforms," she said, noting that this effort was focused on the revenue agencies.

"We believe that perception will match reality in a few years," she said.

Pronounced in classes ABC

The sentiment that the Arroyo administration was the most corrupt was most pronounced in Metro Manila (56 percent) and in socioeconomic group ABC (50 percent), the middle and upper classes.

Fifty percent in Luzon outside Metro Manila, 39 percent in the Visayas, 35 percent in Mindanao, as well as 47 percent in class D, and 37 percent in class E shared the same sentiment.

The survey was conducted from Oct. 20 to 31 when reports on the cash handouts to local government officials in Malacañang, renewed calls for Ms Arroyo's resignation, the planned revival of an impeachment complaint against her, and the continuing Senate investigation of the ZTE contract dominated the headlines.

No difference

Pulse Asia said there was "no difference" in results concerning Ms Arroyo and the question on the most corrupt President, even when the responses were broken down into age brackets of "below 40" (those who were about 18 years old as of 1986) and "over 40."

Of those aged 40 and above, 41 percent pointed to Ms Arroyo as the most corrupt leader in Philippine history, while 38 percent pointed to Marcos.

Asked which administration had the most intense allegations of corruption, 45 percent pointed to the Arroyo administration, 31 percent to the Marcos administration and 14 percent to the Estrada administration.

Seven percent said it was the Ramos administration that had the most intense allegations, while only 1 percent mentioned the Aquino administration in this respect.

In her speech, Ms Arroyo said the government was investing in cutting red tape and in eliminating corruption.

Problem for generations

She said "people deserved an honest and hard working government" because they were honest and hard working.

The problem of corruption has "plagued the Philippines and other countries for generations," Ms Arroyo said.

Forty-five percent in Mindanao viewed the Marcos administration as having the most intense corruption allegations, while 19 percent in the Visayas viewed the Estrada administration in the same light.

Asked which President was "most corrupt" in the history of the country, 42 percent across the country answered Ms Arroyo, 35 percent mentioned Marcos, while 16 percent pointed to Estrada. Five percent answered Ramos, and 1 percent Aquino.

Half of the respondents in Metro Manila, the rest of Luzon and class ABC viewed Ms Arroyo as "most corrupt"—an opinion shared by 43 percent in class D and 35 percent in class E, as well as 34 percent in Mindanao and 27 percent in the Visayas.

Half of the respondents in Mindanao considered Marcos as the most corrupt, while 22 percent in the Visayas viewed Estrada as the most corrupt.

Least corrupt

The survey also found that 66 percent viewed Ms Aquino as the least corrupt President. Eleven percent answered Estrada; 9 percent, Marcos; 6 percent, Ramos; and 5 percent, Ms Arroyo.

The survey used face-to-face interviews with a multistage probability sample of 1,200 representative adults. It had a margin of error of plus-or-minus 3 percentage points.

Other reports that dominated the headlines during the survey included the Glorietta 2 blast, the increasing price of oil in the global market and the steady appreciation of the peso.

Pulse Asia undertakes "Ulat ng Bayan" surveys on its own without any party singularly commissioning them. *Kate Pedroso, Inquirer Research and Christine O. Avendaño*

ON THE GO: President Arroyo walks past the image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus as she goes to her next appointment at the Palace. EDWIN BACASMAS

Filipinos 'upbeat' on 2008–survey

From page A1

cash handouts to congressmen and governors in Malacañang, renewed calls for the resignation of President Macapagal-Arroyo, the Glorietta 2 blast, the continuing investigation of the ZTE contract, the granting of a pardon to convicted plunderer former President Joseph Estrada, the unabated rise in oil prices and the steady appreciation of the peso.

Classes ABC optimistic

Pulse Asia's "Ulat ng Bayan" survey also found that optimism about the coming year was most pronounced in Luzon outside Metro Manila (89 percent) and among members of classes ABC (87 percent).

Eighty-five percent in the Visayas, 78 percent in Metro Manila and 77 percent in Mindanao said they were also facing the coming year with hope, as did 84 percent among members of class D and 81 percent in class E.

Nationwide, 9 percent said they were facing 2008 "with apprehension"—about the same as the 8 percent in 2006 but much lower than the 20 percent in 2005.

Only 7 percent said they were facing the coming year with neither hope nor apprehension.

Neither better nor worse

Half of Filipinos said that this Christmas would neither be better nor worse than the last, an opinion shared across all areas and classes but most pronounced in Metro Manila (57 percent) and among members of classes ABC (61 percent).

Fifty-five percent in the rest of Luzon and 43 percent in the Visayas and Mindanao also said that this coming Christmas would neither be more prosperous nor poorer than last year's celebrations. It was 51 percent in class D and 42 percent in class E.

Nationwide, the sentiment that this Christmas would be more prosperous than the previous one (27 percent) was almost the same as the 25 percent recorded in November 2006 but much higher than the 16 percent in October 2005.

This opinion was more prominent in Mindanao (38 percent) and among members of class E (30 percent). It was 31 percent in the Visayas, 23 percent in Metro Manila and 21 percent in the rest of Luzon. This optimism was shared by 27 percent of the class D and 24 percent of those belonging to classes ABC.

The percentage of those who said that this Christmas would be poorer than the previous year (23 percent) was almost similar to the figure registered in November 2006 (25 percent), but much lower than the 43 percent in October 2005.

Across areas, 27 percent in the Visayas, 24 percent in the rest of Luzon, 21 percent in Metro Manila and 19 percent in Mindanao said this Christmas would be poorer than last year's, while 28 percent in class E, 22 percent in class D and 15 percent in classes ABC said the same.

The survey used face-to-face interviews with a multistage probability sample of 1,200 representative adults. It had a margin of error of plus-or-minus 3 percentage points. *Kate Pedroso, Inquirer Research*

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*IMS-PMDI data period covered July 2006 to June 2007.

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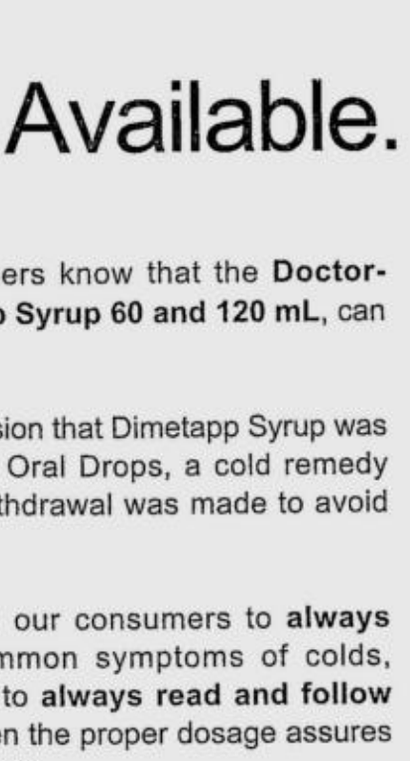

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Media barred from covering Magdalo trial in court

By DJ Yap

MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE trial of the Oakwood coup d'etat case yesterday was a major casualty of the stringent measures taken to secure Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV and junior officers who staged the Nov. 29 takeover of the Peninsula Manila.

No journalist or photographer was allowed inside the courtroom of Judge Oscar Pimentel of Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 148 to report on the proceedings, drawing complaints from media and even some of the prosecutors and lawyers.

"We don't want a secret trial," said State Prosecutor Juan Pedro Navera. "It would not do for the media to simply conduct interviews after the fact," he said.

Previously, the court hearings were open to the media, provided they left their mobile phones and recording equipment on a table set up outside.

Nonilon Tagalicud, the branch clerk of court, said there was an agreement between the building administrator and the judge to accommodate only the accused, their escorts, the lawyers and prosecutors, considering the small space.

He said the decision to keep the media from the courtroom was also so they would not disrupt the proceedings.

Tight space

But Pimentel has said he would allow the presence of the media during the promulgation of his decision, Tagalicud said.

Lawyer Trixie Angeles said the court's decision was likely born out of "practical consideration."

Based on her count, there were more than 60 people crammed inside the courtroom, with the 24 accused each escorted by a guard, plus more than a dozen people from the prosecution panel, the Office of the Solicitor General and the defense lawyers.

Normally the courtroom can only accommodate 30 to 40 people, she said.

But Angeles shared Navera's view that the trial should be open to the public.

"Defense lawyers are constrained from giving their opinion lest they be accused of trying to influence the outcome of the case, so it's better if the media can see for themselves and report what is happening to the public," she said.

Court decision

Attempts to slip into the courtroom by some reporters failed after the military escorts took note of the identities of everyone inside and asked for IDs.

Television crews and photographers were allowed to occupy an area at the far end of the lobby several feet from the courtroom, causing grumbles among the cameramen who complained they were not close enough.

After the hearing, reporters scrambled to get interviews with the departing lawyers and prosecutors to try to recreate the scene inside the courtroom. Trillanes and the other accused only waved to the cameras.

Pool reporting

Following the Peninsula Manila hotel standoff on Nov. 29, reporters were arrested and handcuffed for allegedly interfering in the police operation.

Chief Supt. Samuel Pagdilao, Philippine National Police spokesperson, yesterday suggested that media people form a pool to cover emergency situations.

"Maybe coverages by media can be carried out using a pool of reporters who will have to share their stories with everyone else," Pagdilao said. He said the PNP could suggest this arrangement during the next PNP meeting with the media.

Close-circuit TV

But the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines yesterday urged the courts to be "more transparent."

"Although we understand that the court can bar the media for security reasons, it should respect the media's access to information," NUJP president Jose Torres said in a phone interview.

"If the consideration was security, they should give a provision of public address system and CCTV (close circuit TV) for the benefit of the media. They should be more transparent," he added. ***With reports from TJ Burgonio and Alcuin Papa***

Trillanes says sorry to judge for walkout but not to GMA

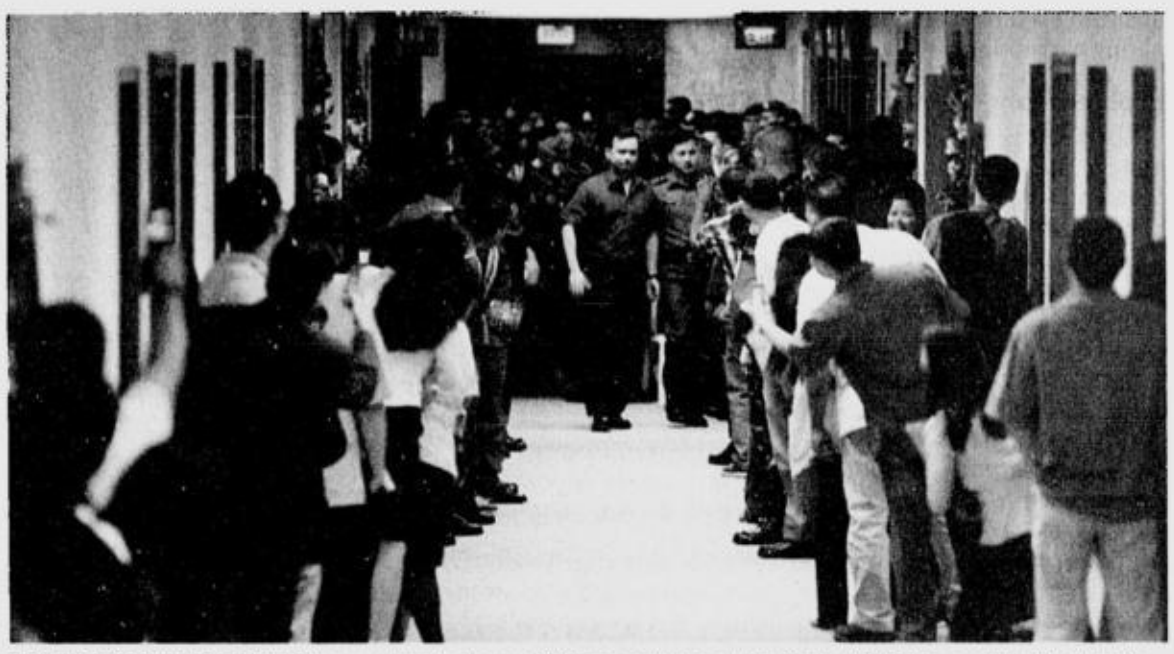
From page A1

tation submitted to Judge Oscar Pimentel of the Makati Regional Trial Court.

Saying they "meant no disrespect" to the judge, the accused said they were "impelled by their passion, zeal and fervor for their cause (and) merely had to act when they did."

Pimentel accepted the apology but warned that any repeat of their action "shall be dealt with more seriously."

More than 1,000 soldiers and police along with an armored personnel carrier (APC) were deployed in the Makati City Hall area. A Philippine Air Force contingent in black panther uniforms lugging long firearms patrolled the building and quadrangle.



PERFORMANCE LEVEL: Like a returning hero, Trillanes arrives at the Makati RTC to a celebrity-struck crowd while under guard by thousands. REM ZAMORA

Trillanes, Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim, and the other accused were handcuffed to their police escorts. Lim, 52, a former Scout Ranger Regiment commander under detention for the failed February 2006 coup, was a defense witness in the Oakwood trial.

Media people were barred from the trial. Police combed the courtroom and sent out reporters who attempted to mingle with the small crowd. ***(See story above).***

Pimentel is the presiding judge in the trial of the failed Oakwood mutiny of 2003.

During the hearing on Nov. 29, Trillanes and the other accused walked out and marched on the Peninsula, triggering a standoff that ended seven hours later when police rammed an APC into the lobby of the five-star hotel and lobbed tear gas cannisters inside.

Trillanes, Lim, former Vice President Teofisto Guingona, Bishop Emeritus Julio Labayen, running priest Fr. Robert Reyes and 32 other soldiers and civilians have been charged with rebellion in connection with the Peninsula standoff but the case has not been scheduled for a hearing.

Enough force

Maj. Gen. Fernando Mesa, chief of the Armed Forces National Capital Region Command, said the security measures were clamped on City Hall to thwart any repetition of the walkout.

"There was enough force prepared for any contingency. We won't allow anything to happen," Mesa said.

President Arroyo, who arrived yesterday from a trip to France, Spain, Britain and Kuwait, has vowed to punish those involved in the Peninsula incident "with the full force of the law," calling them a "few desperate men."

Eleven of the 14 Oakwood mutineers facing trial for the failed coup d'etat in 2003 signed the manifestation apologizing to Pimentel and other parties present during the walkout.

Capt. Nicanor Faeldon, who has remained missing since the incident, did not sign the pleading. Capt. Segundino Orfiano Jr. and 1Lt. Billy Pascua also did not sign but expressed their apology through an oral manifestation by lawyer Theodore Te.

Hope and prayer

"Accordingly, herein accused most respectfully beg and humbly beseech the apologies (sic) of the Honorable Court, the Honorable Presiding Judge as well as the lawyers and other parties during the hearing last 29 November 2007," the 11 soldiers said.

"Herein accused further pray and hope that the Honorable Presiding Judge and the lawyers and other parties present during that day would find it in their hearts to forgive accused for their actions on that day and that the same be not allowed to prejudice the merits of their case," they added.

Except for Faeldon, all of those who participated in the Peninsula takeover were accounted for in yesterday's hearing.

Based on the accounts of defense lawyers and prosecutors, the 13 junior officers who walked out remained handcuffed in the courtroom while their fellow accused who did not join the march were unshackled.

Well-behaved

"They were somber," said State Prosecutor Juan Pedro Navera, a member of the justice department panel prosecuting the case for the government.

"They were well-behaved. There was no disruption. Some were well-behaved, some were smiling. There was nothing of the sort of (commotion that occurred in the last hearing)," said Assistant Chief State Prosecutor Richard Anthony Fadullon.

Some members of the group, including Trillanes, were "stoic" throughout the hearing, lawyer Trixie Angeles, who represents Faeldon, said.

Angeles' presence was questioned by the prosecution panel, who said she could not represent Faeldon, a "fugitive," but the lawyer argued that there remained no evidence that her client had escaped and was not in the custody of the military, whom she suspected of holding him.

Pimentel overruled the objection and allowed Angeles to stay.

CAPT NICANOR FAELDON

CAPT NICANOR FAELDON "FAELDON"

<S: INVOLVED IN 27 JULY 03 FAILED MUTINY INVOLVED IN 29 NOV 2007 MANILA PEN SEIGE AT-LARGE

Sea of uniforms

The first to arrive at the Branch 150 courtroom in the new City Hall building at about 8:30 a.m. were the 11 who did not participate in the walkout. All belong to the Army, except for 1Lt. Francisco Acedillo who is from the Air Force.

A few minutes before 9 a.m., the 13 began streaming out of the elevators on the 14th floor coming from the basement, with their right hands cuffed to escorts and guarded by a composite team of Army, Air Force, Marines and Navy personnel.

A separate squad of police and Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) members led by Supt. Gilbert Cruz, the Makati chief of police, stood guard, as did a few of the City Hall's own security personnel.

The lobby on the fourth floor was rendered a sea of differently colored uniforms—the SWAT men in black, the regular police in blue, the security guards in white and blue, the Army in light camouflage green, the Air Force in dark blue or light blue, the Navy in brown, and the Marines in dark camouflage.

In the first few minutes while waiting for the accused to arrive, some of the soldiers were brandishing long firearms, but the weapons were removed when the hearing started.

Prior to boarding the elevators, Lim was photographed raising his fist. Trillanes was seen with a slight smile, waving a few times to the media, who were restricted to the far end of the lobby several feet away from the courtroom.

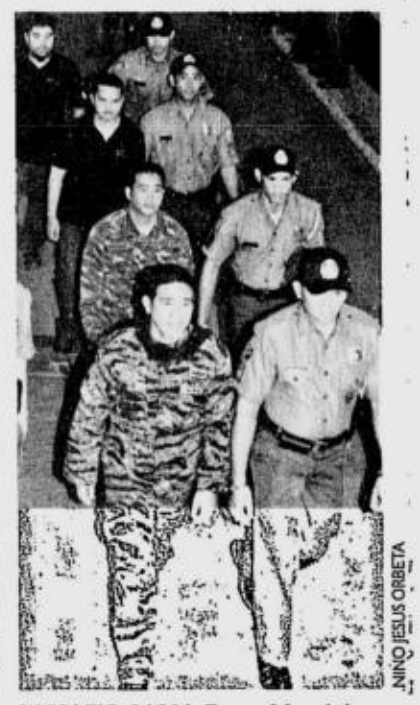
Security tight

The identity of anyone who entered the courtroom was verified through their ID cards, from lawyers to members of the court staff. Reporters who tried to slip into the courtroom were asked to leave and join their colleagues in the lobby.

Pimentel arrived at a little before 9 a.m., escorted by a couple of SWAT men. The accused arrived a few minutes later.

The hearing took less than two hours before the accused were spirited by their escorts into the elevators to the basement, where their vehicles were parked, and brought back to their detention cell at the Camp Crame Custodial Center. ***With reports from Tina G. Santos, Alcuin Papa, Tarra Quismundo and Nancy Carvajal***

THREE IS COMPANY: Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim is escorted by no less than three close-in guards. NIÑO JESUS ORBETA



NIÑO JESUS ORBETA

MAN-TO-MAN: Every Magdalo soldier who goes to court is handcuffed to his guard. A lesson in security precautions has been learned albeit belatedly.

Palace did not release P100-M pork requested by Trillanes

From page A1

lawyer and Senate chief of staff, said there was no connection between the pork barrel request and Trillanes' actions on Nov. 29.

"That's malicious insinuation. He made the request recently and funds are not released immediately. So why would he make a fuss about it?" Robles said.

Apostol claimed he got this information from an intelligence report.

"Had the funds been released, perhaps he could have used the funds to topple the government," he said.

The pork barrel, or the Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF), comes from the national budget and finances the pet projects of members of the House of Representatives and the Senate. It is a known source of kickbacks for lawmakers.

A senator is entitled to P200 million in PDAF and a member of the House, P70 million.

Villar endorsement

More than a month before the failed revolt, the former military-rebel-turned-senator sought the release of P100 million of his pork barrel.

Senate President Manuel Villar Jr. endorsed on Nov. 12 Trillanes' request to the DBM for the release of the amount to fund his priority projects for 2007.

Villar confirmed that he signed and endorsed Trillanes' request, but said it was just ministerial on his part.

He said he endorsed the request of all senators. "But no funds are released to the opposition," he said.

Apostol said the DBM received the Senate endorsement of Trillanes' projects on Nov. 15.

"You could see how this fellow thinks. He thinks he can toy around with this government. While he is trying to topple the government, he's also trying to demand funds (from it)," Apostol said.

Trillanes, Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim and 34 others have been charged with rebellion for the takeover of the Peninsula Manila hotel in Makati City.

The seven-hour siege ended when Trillanes and his group surrendered to authorities.

Aid to patients

At a news briefing, Apostol released to reporters a copy of the Oct. 15 letter of Trillanes to Villar and copies of 54 priority projects he wished to finance.

In his letter of request, Trillanes identified the projects, the agencies that would implement them, the provinces where the projects would be implemented and the amount of each project.

Most of the projects included "assistance to indigent patients" but Trillanes also sought funding for public works projects such as the construction of municipal water system, and medical, dental and municipal buildings.

In his letter to Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya Jr., Villar said Trillanes was seeking P40 million from the public works funds and P60 million from the PDAF.

Turnaround

Shortly after assuming office, Trillanes declared he would not touch his pork barrel allocation, like opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

Trillanes denounced pork barrel as a source of corruption.

Robles said the neophyte senator changed his mind "upon the advice of people from the Senate, his consultants, and myself (Robles)."

"Initially, he didn't want to touch it. But if he did not use it, somebody would," Robles said, citing administration Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago's reasoning that senators should use their pork barrel to help public hospitals.

Robles said the senator, however, made it clear to the beneficiaries that he would not get any commission from the projects.

No funds for opposition

"We know that the pork barrel is not released to opposition (members), but local government officials said they would follow it up and do liaison work with Malacañang for its release," Robles said.

Apostol said Trillanes was asking the funds for "allegedly certain projects but we have doubts if it would be used for projects because he has a different agenda."

"It's intended to finance his own agenda," he said at a press briefing.

Rights suspended

Asked why the DBM did not release the amount requested by the senator, Apostol said: "Because he did not respect this government ... why should it be given to him?"

"You see Trillanes was talking about toppling this government. That is what precipitated this government to hold in abeyance the release of this funds," he said.

"This was actually later on supported by his acts at Manila Pen."

Apostol said he did not think the senator should be trusted and that it was only "right" that a rebellion charge was filed against him.

But he said the demand letter of Trillanes could not be used as evidence in the latter's rebellion case, noting that "it is an evidence about how this fellow thinks that he can toy with this government..."

Given that Trillanes sought to topple the government, the senator "had no right to ask funds" from it, Apostol said.

Being detained for his involvement in the 2003 Oakwood mutiny, Trillanes "under the Revised Penal Code ... has no rights. His rights are suspended," the President's legal counsel said.

"He has to go to court, seek permission from the court for the release of funds," Apostol said.

NOBEL PEACE PRIZE WINNERS Al Gore (left) and cowinner, the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change represented by its chair, Dr. Rajenda K. Pachauri, share a hearty laugh during a CNN interview following the award rites in Oslo, Norway. AP

Gore tells world: Time ...

From page A1

warming and spreading awareness on how to counteract it. His fellow winner, the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, was represented by its leader, Rajendra Pachauri.

Gore, who lost the 2000 US presidential race by a razor-thin margin, and Pachauri accepted the Nobel gold medal and diploma at a gala ceremony in the Oslo City Hall.

In his speech, Gore urged government officials meeting in Bali, Indonesia, to quickly draft a treaty to limit emissions of the gases that cause climate change, as a follow-up to the 1997 Kyoto accord. He and Pachauri are leaving for Bali on Wednesday.

Appeal to US, China

In a speech that evoked Winston Churchill, Mahatma Gandhi and the Bible, Gore said the world's biggest polluters, the United States and China, must stop blaming each other for the stalemate over warming.

Instead, the United States and China must take the lead in solving a problem for which they bear a large responsibility or be held "accountable before history for their failure to act," Gore said.

He drew a parallel between leaders ignoring the climate crisis and those whom Churchill, the British prime minister, lambasted for inaction as Adolf Hitler built up Nazi Germany before World War II.

"Too many of the world's leaders are still best described in the words Winston Churchill applied to those who ignored Adolf Hitler's threat: 'They go on in strange paradox, decided only to be undecided, resolved to be irresolute, adamant for drift, solid for fluidity, all powerful to be impotent,'" Gore said.

To meet the new "planetary emergency," he said: "We must quickly mobilize our civilization with the urgency and resolve that has previously been seen only when nations mobilized for war."

Threats can be met

Although Pachauri described the threat largely in measured, scientific terms, he too described a grim fate for the planet if the emission of greenhouse gasses is not limited.

A warming climate could lead to flooding of low-lying countries, disruptions to food supply, the spread of diseases and the loss of biodiversity, he said.

"Neglect in protecting our heritage of natural resources could prove extremely harmful for the human race and for all species that share common space on Planet Earth," Pachauri said in his speech. "It is within the reach of human society to meet these threats."

Gore said the next generation would ask the present generation one of two questions. "Either they will ask: What were you thinking; why didn't you act? Or they will ask instead: How did you find the moral courage to rise and successfully resolve a crisis that so many said was impossible to solve?"

10 others honored

The Nobel Prizes for medicine, chemistry, physics, literature and economics were presented in a separate ceremony on Monday in Stockholm, Sweden, where five Americans and five Europeans were honored for their groundbreaking achievements in science and literature.

Sweden's King Carl XVI Gustaf presented the awards amid trumpet fanfares and speeches by members of the Nobel committees in medicine, physics, chemistry, economics and literature at Stockholm's Concert Hall.

The oldest laureates—literature prize winner Doris Lessing, 88, and economics cowinner Leonid Hurwicz, 90—were not able to travel to Stockholm for health reasons. They will receive their prizes at separate ceremonies in London and Minnesota, respectively.

Lessing, who saw her breakthrough with the 1962 novel "The Golden Notebook," had "personified the woman's role in the 20th century," literature committee chair Per Wasterberg said in a speech.

"Age is no issue in literature. You are forever young and wise, old and rebellious," Wasterberg said about the British writer.

Prize for physics

Albert Fert of France and Peter Gruenberg of Germany received the physics prize for discovering a phenomenon that enables computers and digital music players to store reams of data on ever-shrinking hard disks.

"One can in all justice say that this effect is one prerequisite for the modern IT revolution," Nobel committee member Boerje Johansson said.

At dinner banquet later Monday, Fert said that in his youth he dreamed of entering the field of arts, inspired by Swedish filmmaker Ingmar Bergman.

"I realized unfortunately I was light years from Ingmar Bergman ... but I thought that I had some skills in physics," Fert said, explaining his career choice.

FOOTNOTE: Observed during the Nobel Peace Prize awarding rites at the City Hall in Oslo was Al Gore's preferred choice of footwear: Cowboy boots, right there beside his Nobel diploma under his seat. AP

Chemistry prize

The chemistry prize was awarded to Germany's Gerhard Ertl for his studies of chemical reactions on solid surfaces, while the medicine prize was shared by Mario Capecchi and Oliver Smithies, both of the United States, and Sir Martin J. Evans of Britain for discoveries that led to a technique for manipulating mouse genes.

Eric Maskin and Roger Myerson, both of the United States, were on hand to receive the economics prize they shared with Hurwicz—the oldest Nobel laureate ever—for work on how people's knowledge and self-interest affect their behavior in the market or in social situations such as voting and labor negotiations.

The awards were announced in October but are always presented in Oslo and Stockholm on Dec. 10 to mark the anniversary of the 1896 death of their creator, Alfred Nobel. The first Nobel Prizes were handed out in 1901. *AP*

Dispute over new pact mars Kyoto Protocol's 10th birthday

NUSA DUA, INDONESIA—THE worldwide forum on climate change marked the 10th anniversary of the Kyoto Protocol on Tuesday, but the celebrations were shadowed by doubts on a new pact to tackle global warming.

A giant birthday cake was unveiled on the sidelines of the talks in Bali to commemorate Dec. 11, 1997 when the world's most ambitious environment treaty was born in the Japanese city of Kyoto.

Two parties were to be staged in the evening, one by Japanese green groups and the other by the United Nations' Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

The Kyoto Protocol took effect on Feb. 16, 2005 after gruelling negotiations to complete its rule book on curbing greenhouse gas emissions.

In its present form, however, the Kyoto accord will not do enough to stem the surge in pollution, which scientists say is badly damaging the Earth's climate system.

Worse droughts and floods, rising sea levels and more violent storms lie just decades away, according to world scientists.

The conference of 190 countries is seeking to draw up the so-called "Bali Roadmap" that will set the parameters for further negotiations leading to a new accord to accelerate cuts in greenhouse gas emissions after 2012, when the protocol's current roster of pledges runs out.

Only 3 days left

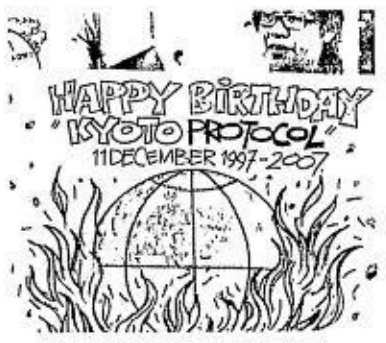
European Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas said just three days remained for ensuring that a new pact "is sufficiently ambitious to tackle the climate challenge we face."

"I believe that this conference is on track to deliver good results, but the next three days will be decisive and I have no doubt that there will be some difficult discussions," he said.

Officials involved in crafting the Bali Roadmap are struggling on key questions on how extensive the post-2012 negotiation mandate should be and whether the negotiations should be set a two-year deadline for conclusion.

A previous commitment by industrialized countries, sketching their "ambition" to reduce their own carbon emissions by between 25 and 40 percent by 2020 compared with 1990 levels, was weeded out in a new version of the text, according to green groups.

Similar text was under threat in a second document, this time from a group that includes the United States, Japan and Canada which argued that such figures would prejudge the negotiations for the post-2012 accord.



THE WORLDWIDE FORUM on climate change in Bali, marks the 10th anniversary of the Kyoto Protocol on Tuesday. The cake is there but the party mood was problematic as delegates tackle a new global warming agreement. AFP

Directionless fudge

But green activists warned against changes that would turn the much-vaunted roadmap into a directionless fudge.

"Ministers cannot leave Bali without an ambitious mandate. People won't buy it," said WWF's Hans Verolme.

The 25-40-percent figure holds major resonance, as it chimes with an estimate by the UN's Nobel-winning scientific panel for limiting warming to around 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) over preindustrial times.

UNFCCC Executive Director Yvo de Boer, however, stressed that the figure had never been enshrined as a target for rich countries and was more of a guideline, adding that the Bali conference should be used to launch a negotiation process.

These and other thorny details are expected to be shunted over to environment ministers, whose meeting from Wednesday to Friday will end the conference.

Significant success

Late Monday, the talks notched up their first significant success with a decision on how to administer a fund to bolster the defenses of poor countries that lack the money, technology and skills to cope with climate change.

It will be financed by a levy of 2 percent on transactions under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), a piece of Kyoto machinery by which rich countries get carbon credits. They can offset these credits against their emissions targets, provided they invest in clean energy projects in poor countries.

The Bali talks are taking place against a backdrop of dark scientific warnings about climate change and growing public and political awareness.

The issue's profile has grown rapidly this year, capped by the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize on Monday to climate campaigner Al Gore and the UN's paramount scientific body on global warming, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. *AFP*

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SIMVASTATIN*	20 mg tab x 30	P 20.15	53%
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ANTI-DIABETES			
GLICLAZIDE*	80 mg tab x 100	P 5.90	56%
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	850 mg tab x 100	P 7.15	61%
ANTI-ASTHMA			
SALBUTAMOL*	2 mg syr x 60mL	P 43.60	60%
	2 mg tab x 100	P 1.90	73%
ANTI-INFECTIVES			
CEFALEXIN*	250 mg cap x 100	P 11.25	61%
	500 mg cap x 100	P 19.00	60%
	125 mg susp x 60mL	P 87.50	50%
	250 mg susp x 60mL	P 159.50	55%
	100 mg drops x 10mL	P 94.25	38%
CEFACLOR*	250 mg cap x 30	P 42.60	47%
	500 mg cap x 30	P 78.25	25%
	125 mg susp x 30mL	P 138.25	70%
	125 mg susp x 105mL	P 338.25	27%
	50 mg drops x 20 mL	P 235.75	14%
CLOXACILLIN*	500 mg cap x 100	P 15.80	74%
AMOXICILLIN*	250 mg cap x 100	P 4.60	29%
	500 mg cap x 100	P 6.15	43%
	250 mg susp x 60mL	P 99.25	3%
ERYTHROMYCIN*	250 mg tab x 100	P 7.45	62%
	500 mg tab x 100	P 16.50	50%
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	500 mg tab x 100	P 6.60	76%
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SPORTS

Williams is week's best

THE PHILIPPINE BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION Press Corps yesterday named Fil-Am Kelly Williams of Sta. Lucia as its Player of the Week for the period of Dec. 5-10.

Williams was instrumental in the Realtors' victories over the Alaska Aces, 94-88, Wednesday at the Big Dome and the Barangay Ginebra Kings, 79-78, Sunday at the Astrodome.

In those two wins, Williams averaged 13.5 points, 9.5 rebounds, two assists and 2.5 steals.

The high-leaping sophomore shone the brightest in the win over Ginebra where he buried four booming triples in the fourth quarter including three in the last three minutes that gave Sta. Lucia a share of the No. 5 spot with Talk 'N Text on 6-6 (win-loss) slates.

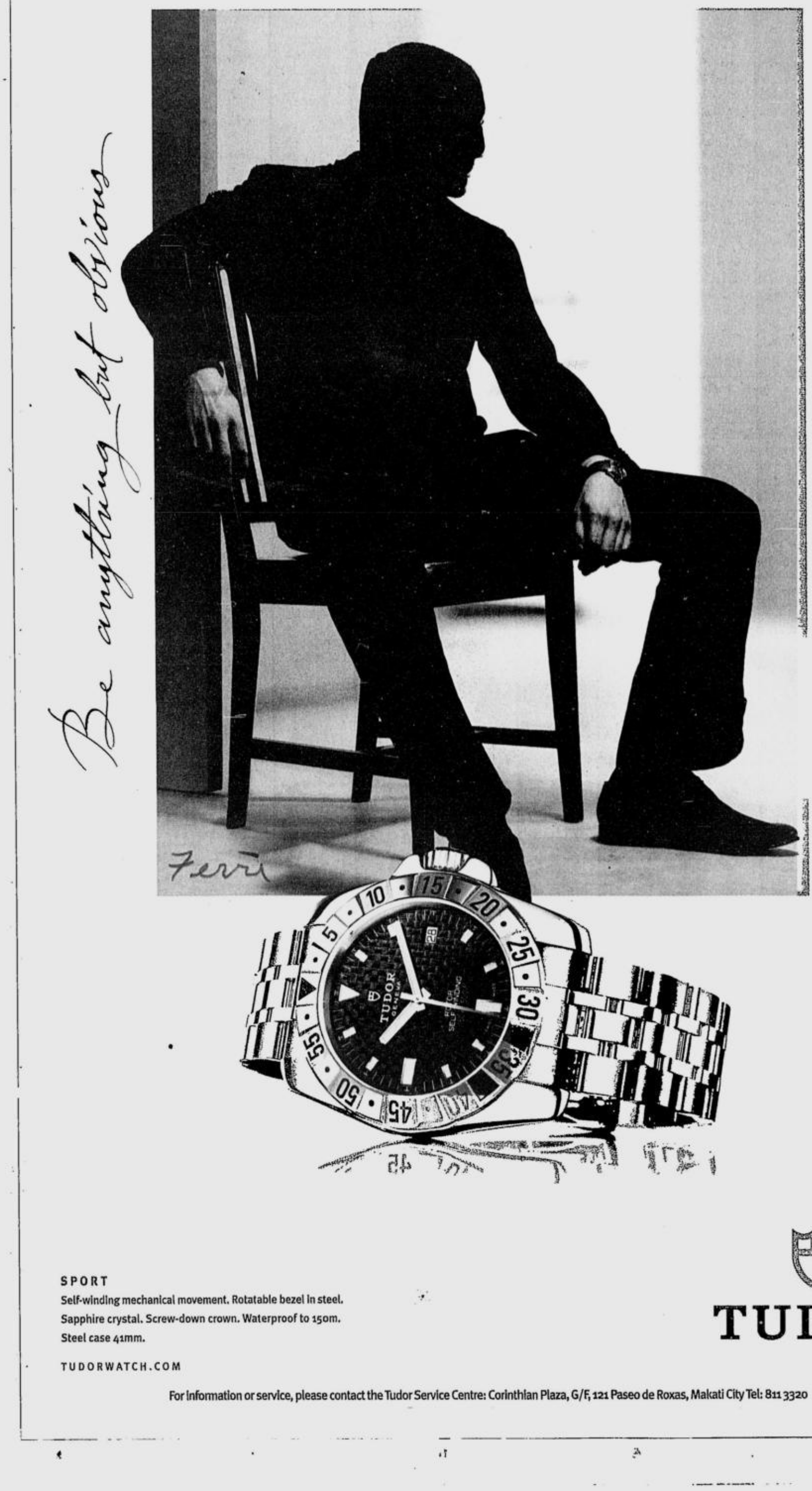
"He's capable of making the big shots and showed that in this game," said Sta. Lucia coach Boyet Fernandez of Williams minutes after their Barangay Ginebra win.

Other players mentioned for the plum, sponsored by Smart and Accel, were Sta. Lucia teammates Nelbert Omolon and Paolo Mendoza.

Omolon, another of Sta. Lucia's high-leapers, made heads turn when he unleashed a 29-point effort in the Alaska victory. That was a point shy of his career best 30-point performance in a 104-115 loss to Red Bull on April 26 last year.

Mendoza, for his part, drained a difficult running, fade away jumper with 4.6 seconds to go over the chasing Mark Caguioa.

PUREFOODS' Marc Pingris looks as if he has less-than-noble intentions in mind as he tries to defend against Welcoat's Joe De Vance in their game Sunday night. The Giants conquered the Dragons, 92-80. RYAN LIM



Hot Coke takes on Magnolia

SUDDENLY, COCA-COLA HAS become the hottest team in the Smart-PBA Philippine Cup.

Three games after bringing former MVP Asi Taulava into the fold, the Tigers have won back-to-back assignments and are now gunning for a third consecutive win, a welcome departure for a team that was once mired in a laughable eight-game slide.

Victories over Red Bull and Sta. Lucia have restored the Tigers' confidence, one that will be tested by the Magnolia Beverage Masters when both teams clash today at the Araneta Coliseum.

Taulava, acquired in a trade that sent Ali Peek to Talk 'N Text, will again be in the middle of Coca-Cola's scheme of things, for reasons other than the numbers he contributes to the stat sheets.

"Asi is amazing but what's really commendable about him are his energy and leadership," said Coca-Cola coach Binky Favis, whose 3-8 record is half a step out of last place partly because of the Welcoat Dragons' (3-9) 92-80 loss to Purefoods Sunday night.

Air21 and Alaska, two teams coming off defeats, engage in a foot race back to the win column right after the Magnolia-Coca-Cola battle.

STANDINGS	W	L
Purefoods	10	3
Red Bull	8	4
Magnolia	7	5
Alaska	7	5
Talk 'N Text	6	6
Sta. Lucia	6	6
Air21	5	6
Ginebra	5	8
Coca-Cola	3	8
Welcoat	3	9

GAMES TODAY (Araneta Coliseum)
4:50 p.m.—Magnolia vs Coca-Cola
7:20 p.m.—Air21 vs Alaska

The 6-foot-9 Taulava has been the guide and inspiration for a Tigers pack that was never given a second look at the start of the season.

"He's a big brother to his teammates; he comes in trying to push everybody even in practice," said Favis. "Even Ken (Duremdes) and (Mark) Telan have been showing the way for the little ones since Asi arrived."

Chip by chip

Though John Arigo continued to rest a hyper-extended elbow, Coca-Cola's top scorer was hardly missed the past two games as the veterean smarts of Duremdes, Telan and Taulava have rubbed off on the likes of Alex Cabagnot, Chester Tolomia and dynamic rookie Ronjay Buenafe.

Despite the mini-resurgence, the Tigers are still languishing in a deep hole.

"We have to go through this chip by chip so I told them that we have to be totally committed to our objective," said Favis.

Coach Siot Tanquingcen and the Beverage Masters are coming off a 94-88 loss to Red Bull in a game they appeared to have under control until the end.

Magnolia's Three Ds—Danny Ildefonso, Danny Seigle and Dondon Hontiveros—almost had the Beverage Masters celebrating until the aggressiveness of Red Bull's Junthy Valenzuela and the torrid shooting of Mick Pennisi and Celino Cruz turned things around.

Magnolia is at 7-5, in a tie with an Alaska squad that is coming off a loss to Sta. Lucia a week ago. The Aces try to rebound from that loss against the Express, who lost recently to the Baranagay Ginebra Kings. *June Navarro*

More Sports stories and SEA Games updates on A29 to 34

Aplus METRO

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Editor Ester G. Dipasupil

Metro braces for transport strike

Jeeps, buses off the road in other key cities also on Thursday

CATCHING A FEW WINKS
A soldier walks past his companions resting on the pavement outside the Makati City Hall as they wait for Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV and others, accused in the Oakwood mutiny trial to show up. JESUS ORBETA

By Riza T. Olchondra

COMMUTERS IN METRO MANILA AND KEY CITIES AND provinces nationwide should brace themselves for a nationwide transport strike on Thursday.

The strike will be spearheaded by militant groups Pagkakaisa ng mga Samahan ng Tsuper at Operator Nationwide (Piston) and the Transport Forum against Oil Price Increase.

According to Piston secretary general George San Mateo, the nationwide protest was aimed at conveying three messages to the government—it must restrict oil price hikes and scrap the 12 percent expanded value-added tax on oil products.

Lastly, it should suspend the Oil Deregulation Law, or better yet, cancel it altogether, he added.

San Mateo noted that the price of diesel has hit P39.80 per liter while gasoline is now priced at P45.77 per liter.

Affected areas apart from Metro Manila are Baguio City, Bulacan, Laguna, Cavite, Rizal, Batangas, Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Albay, Catanduanes, Masbate, Negros Occidental, Iloilo, Aklan, Roxas City, Cebu, Cagayan de Oro, Davao and General Santos City.

The transport strike in Iloilo, Aklan (Dec. 12 and 13) and Negros (Dec. 13 to 14) will last for two days, San Mateo said.

In Metro Manila, the brunt of the strike will be felt in designated rally centers: The Alabang City terminal, Cubao in Quezon City; Ever Grand Central in the Monumento area, Kalayaan corner Kamias and Philcoa in Quezon City, Aduana Circle, Manila South Harbor; beside the Taytay Public Market in Rizal province and Novaliches Bayan.

San Mateo said independent jeep, bus, and tricycle operators and drivers would also join the protest.

Office messenger missing after encashing ₱4M in checks

By Kristine L. Alave

PASIG CITY POLICEMEN ARE LOOKING for an employee of the V. V. Soliven Group of Companies accused by his employers of stealing a large amount of cash last week.

PO2 Norman Barcellano identified the suspect as Rigino Cruz, a messenger of the company and a resident of M. H. del Pilar in Pasay City.

According to the statement of Leonor Estaca, the company's assistant treasurer, they ordered Cruz last Thursday to encash two checks worth P446,700.

They also instructed him to deposit the money in a bank at the Ortigas Center and another one in Greenhills.

On Monday, Estaca said they received a call from one of the banks which informed them that they have yet to receive the money.

The company official added that they also checked with the other bank in Ortigas Center and were told that there was no deposit made to their account last week.

According to Estaca, Cruz has not shown up for work since he went to the banks last week, triggering speculations that he might have run away with the money.

The police said they were investigating Cruz's background and his last known whereabouts.

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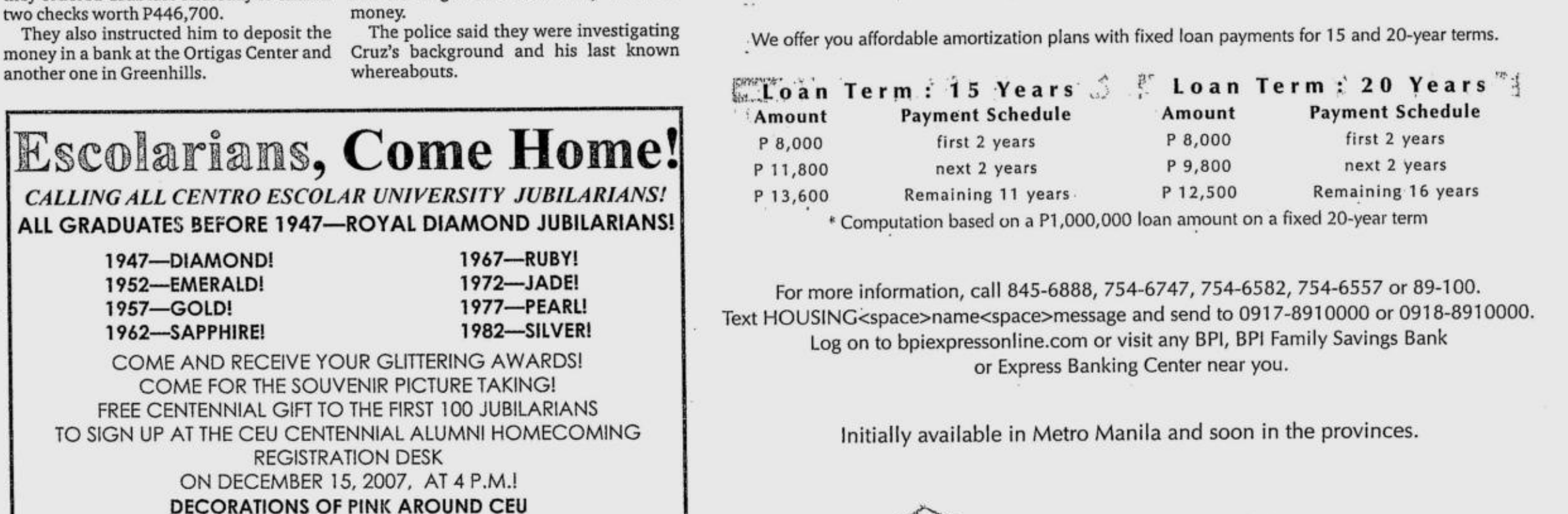

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2 men accused of selling fake US dollars nabbed

By Tina G. Santos

TWO MEN WHO ALLEGEDLY tried to sell fake US dollars and Federal Reserve notes to a businessman have been arrested by National Bureau of Investigation agents in Pasay City.

The two were identified as Sahiran Didik, 44, and George Celestial, 28, residents of Palawan province.

Both were charged with forging treasury or bank notes and illegal possession and use of false treasury or bank notes in the Pasay City Prosecutor's Office.

The two were arrested on Nov. 30 but the NBI released the details of the case only yesterday upon receiving confirmation from a United States agent that the dollar bills offered for sale by the suspects were fake.

The case stemmed from a complaint filed by Eri Masangcay, who claimed that the suspects offered to sell him—at an exchange rate of P1 for every US dollar—over $5 million in Federal Reserve notes and dollar bills.

The suspects then showed him five $1 million bills, several other dollar bills and Federal Reserve notes.

Sensing that the money being offered to him were fakes, Masangcay said he borrowed one of the bills and sent it to a relative in the United States for verification.

When his suspicion was confirmed, Masangcay went to the NBI which immediately formed a team for an entrapment operation.

The businessman then called up the two suspects and pretended to be interested in buying the dollar bills from them. Masangcay agreed to meet them at the parking lot of the Centennial Airport, Terminal 2 in Pasay City last Nov. 30.

NBI agents later seized the fake $1 million bills and Federal Reserve notes from the two suspects.

A certification issued by Virgil Reichel Jr., a special agent of the Department of Homeland Security based in Guam, said the US Treasury and Bureau of Engraving and Imprinting had never issued a $1 million bill.

Reichel added that Federal Reserve notes are never released to the public.

DID YOU KNOW

THE COUNTRY'S first railroad line, the 195-kilometer Manila-Dagupan line, opened to the public on Nov. 24, 1892. The first train left Manila at 10:30 a.m. and arrived in Dagupan at 6 p.m. the same day. The line's operations ended in the 1980s.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

METROBRIEFS

Cop gets 20 years for illegal gun

IGNORING a policeman's claim that the unlicensed gun and grenade found in his house were not his, a Manila judge yesterday sentenced the law enforcer to a maximum of 20 years in prison after he was found guilty of illegal possession of firearms and an explosive. PO3 Romeo de la Cruz Santos, formerly of the Manila Police District's human resource department, claimed that he did not own the .45 caliber pistol, two magazines and grenade seized in a raid at 2137 Elias St. in Sta. Cruz, Manila in May 2004. Judge Silvino Pampilo of the Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 26, however, said that ownership was not an essential element of illegal possession of firearm and ammunition. "Good faith and absence of criminal intent are not valid defenses. Mere possession without criminal intent is sufficient to convict a person for illegal possession of firearm," he said in an eight-page decision. Apart from the jail term, Santos was ordered to pay a fine of P80,000.

Allison W. Lopez

SK official to sit in City Council

DESPITE an ongoing investigation into allegations of vote buying, the newly elected president of Manila's Sangguniang Kabataan Federation would be recognized as the newest member of the City Council tomorrow. Vice Mayor and council presiding officer Isko Moreno yesterday said they had no right to stop Russel Ibay, who won by a landslide in the SK federation elections last Dec. 6, from taking his seat in the body. Ibay, son of former Councilor Ric Ibay, was accused by several SK chairs of vote buying, prompting Mayor Alfredo Lim to order the police to conduct an investigation. "We don't have any personality not to accept him. We cannot deprive this group of their representative in the city council," said Moreno. The SK chairs, in their complaint to the police, claimed the younger Ibay and the other members of his ticket gave them money and free concert tickets.

Allison W. Lopez

Groceries for Pasig's poor

THE PASIG City government is handing out groceries to about 100,000 indigent residents starting tomorrow, city hall officials said yesterday. Each package, Mayor Robert Eusebio said, contains five kilos of *sinandomeng* rice, a kilo of sugar, and canned goods such as corned beef and meat loaf, and cheese. The city government of Pasig distributes grocery packages to residents in depressed communities every Christmas. According to Lolet Austria, Eusebio's executive assistant, the gift bags will be distributed in each barangay. Village heads will determine who are qualified to get the groceries. She noted that the villages of Pinagbuhatan, Manggahan and Rosario, the three most populous communities in Pasig City, will probably receive the bulk of the goods.

Kristine L. Alave

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WORLDBRIEFS

Pakistan test-fires missile

ISLAMABAD—Pakistan successfully tested a cruise missile with a range of 700 km on Tuesday, the military said. The military did not say on Tuesday if the Hatf-VII (Babur) missile is nuclear-capable but it has previously identified it as such. The test would consolidate Pakistan's strategic capability and strengthen national security, the military said in a statement. "The Babur, which has near-stealth capabilities, is a low flying, terrain hugging missile with high maneuverability, pin-point accuracy and radar avoidance features," it said. ***Reuters***

San Francisco sues ship owners

SAN FRANCISCO—The city filed a lawsuit on Monday claiming negligence by the owners and operators of the Hong-Kong-based ship that caused last month's oil spill in San Francisco Bay. The suit brought in San Francisco Superior Court by City Attorney Dennis Herrera alleges the cargo ship's owners and ship pilot John Cota violated California law by sailing the boat under dangerous conditions. It also maintains they failed to respond quickly enough to prevent a spill when the ship struck a bridge tower. ***AP***

Lebanon polls postponed anew

BEIRUT—A parliamentary session to elect a new president in Lebanon was postponed on Monday for an eighth time, with a new date set for Dec. 17, parliament speaker Nabih Berri said. "The office of the speaker has decided to postpone tomorrow's session to next Monday," a statement said. The postponement was necessary "in order to allow for more consultation to agree on the election of a new president for the country," it added. ***AFP***

Malaysian floods kill 6

KUALA LUMPUR—The death toll from widespread floods in Malaysia has risen to six and the number of people evacuated to relief center increased sharply as heavy rains continued to fall, officials and reports said on Tuesday. A 15-year-old boy is thought to have drowned after he went swimming in a canal in north eastern Kelantan state, the official Bernama news agency reported. Bernama on Sunday had reported five dead and three missing in the floods, which have hit three states in the peninsula. ***AFP***

School shooting in India

NEW DELHI—A teenage student was killed on Tuesday when a classmate opened fire with a revolver at a school outside India's capital, a news report said. The shooting took place at a private boarding school in the suburb of Gurgaon, a senior police official, Satish Balan, told the CNN-IBN television news station. ***AP***

Colorado shootings traced to one man

COLORADO SPRINGS—Two shootings at Christian centers in Colorado that left five people dead were most likely carried out by the same man, local media quoting police reported on Monday.

Forensic evidence found at the two crime scenes indicated that 24-year-old Matthew Murray, who was shot dead by a security guard after he opened fire at the New Life megachurch in Colorado Springs, was behind both attacks.

"Within the past 30 minutes, testing has confirmed that the handgun found at the church in Colorado Springs is forensically linked to shell casings found at the crime scene in Arvada," Arvada Police Chief Don Wick was quoted as saying by the Rocky Mountain News.

Murray's first attack claimed the lives of two workers at the Youth With a Mission training center in the Denver suburb of Arvada, in the early hours of Sunday morning. Police said Murray had been dismissed from the center in 2002 and they were probing the circumstances surrounding his sacking.

Roughly 12 hours after the attack on the missionary center, Murray opened fire at the New Life church in Colorado Springs, some 120 kilometers away, as thousands of people gathered at the facility for Sunday worship. ***AFP***

Patience running out with Burma, says UN

BANGKOK—THE INTERNATIONAL community's "patience is running out" with military-ruled Burma (Myanmar) and foot-dragging over its moves towards democracy, United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said on Monday.

"I hope the Burmese authorities will take it very seriously," Ban said during a visit to Thailand, where he urged the Association of South East Asian Nations (Asean), of which the former Burma is a member, to play a "special political role."

"The people of Burma have suffered from isolation for such a long time and it is high time now for the Burmese authorities and people to be able to enjoy genuine democracy and genuine integration in the international community," Ban said.

En route to a climate change conference in Bali, Ban said he would continue with the mission of his special envoy, Ibrahim Gambari, to bring the generals to the negotiating table with detained opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

Gambari has visited twice since September's bloody crackdown against major pro-democracy protests in which the UN says up to 4,000 people were arrested and at least 31 killed—more than three times the junta's official toll.

He has held meetings with Nobel peace laureate Suu Kyi and junta supremo Than Shwe, although so far the only concrete result of his visits has been the appointment of another general to act as go-between for the pair.

US first lady Laura Bush, an outspoken critic of Burma's junta's crackdown on protesters, said on International Human Rights Day the citizens of Burma should be remembered.

"For nearly 20 years, Burma's military regime has crushed peaceful dissent and jailed thousands of political prisoners," she said in a videoconference with US officials and Dr. Cynthia Maung, the founder of a clinic along the Thai-Burma border.

"President Bush and I call on all nations—especially Burma's neighbors—to use their influence to help bring about a democratic transition," Laura Bush said. ***Reuters***

First regular train service links North, South Korea

DORASAN STATION—North and South Korea on Tuesday began a regular train service across their fortified border for the first time in over 50 years, in the latest reconciliation project between the historic enemies.

A locomotive pulling 10 container trucks loaded with kerbstones and raw material for shoe factories traveled north across the frontier to Panmun station near an inter-Korean industrial complex at Kaesong.

It later returned to the South carrying shoes, garments and machinery produced in the Seoul-funded complex just north of the border.

The daily freight service is the first tangible achievement of an inter-Korean summit in October, which agreed on a variety of sweeping projects to promote peace and economic engagement.

The last regular rail operation was in 1951, during the 1950-53 Korean War.

The hope is that one day the railway will also carry passengers and act as the first link with Europe via the trans-China and trans-Siberian networks.

"We are relinking the last vein that has been severed for 56 years," said Lee Chul, president of state operator Korail.

"It looks like a humble start but this is the first step to Europe through the trans-Siberian railway," he told reporters at Dorasan station, last stop on the South Korean side before the frontier.

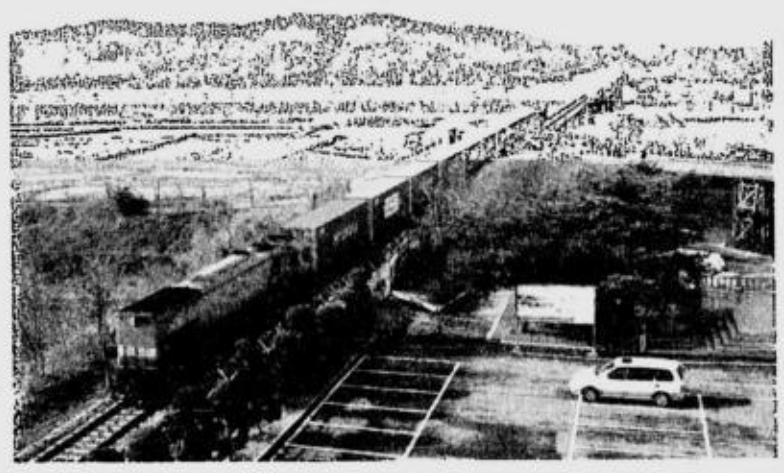
Trains made one-off cross-border test runs in May in what the South hailed as a highly symbolic event. But delays in obtaining safety guarantees from the North's military had delayed the launch of a regular service.

Trains are restricted to a maximum speed of 60 km per hour when traversing the closely guarded frontier.

"This is a dream come true," said driver Shin Jang-Chul, who also drove one of the trains on the test runs.

"I'm happy to drive this train to the North where both my parents were born. I hope not only cargos but tourists as well will use this train to go back and forth."

During the summit South Korea offered help to restore the North's dilapidated railway system up to the border with China.



THE first regular South Korean cargo train returns from North Korea at the Imjingang Station in Paju, north of Seoul, Dec. 11. REUTERS

Apart from its symbolic value in linking two nations still technically at war, Seoul hopes the train will eventually slash transport costs for the factories at Kaesong.

Some 20,000 North Koreans earning about $60 a month produce clothes, utensils, watches and other goods for South Korean firms. Seoul sees Kaesong as a model for projects to narrow the huge wealth gap in preparation for eventual reunification. ***AFP***

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2007

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

US ice storm blacks out 600,000 homes

FALLEN tree limbs cover Britton Road after an ice storm in eastern Oklahoma County on Monday, Dec. 10. AP

OKLAHOMA CITY—A WINTRY STORM CAKED America's center with a thick layer of ice, blacking out more than 600,000 homes and businesses, and more icy weather was on the way. At least 18 deaths in Oklahoma and Missouri were blamed on the conditions, with 15 of them killed on slick highways.

A state of emergency was declared for all of Oklahoma, where the sound of branches snapping under the weight of the ice echoed through Oklahoma City.

"You can hear them falling everywhere," Lonnie Compton said on Monday as he shoveled ice off his driveway.

The National Weather Service posted ice and winter storm warnings on Tuesday for parts of Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa and Illinois. Missouri declared an emergency on Sunday and put the National Guard on alert.

Oklahoma utilities said a half-million customers were blacked out as power lines snapped under the weight of ice and falling tree branches, the biggest power outage in state history, and utilities in Missouri said more than 100,000 homes and business had no power there.

"If you do the math, probably one out of three Oklahomans has no electricity at this point," said Gil Broyles, a spokesperson for Oklahoma Gas & Electric, the state's largest utility.

Roughly 11,000 customers were blacked out in southern Illinois and more than 5,000 had no electric heat or lights in Kansas, where Gov. Kathleen Sebelius declared a statewide state of emergency.

At O'Hare International Airport, about 200 flights were canceled on Monday, with delays of about 45 minutes, said Chicago Department of Aviation spokesperson Karen Pride. Fewer than a dozen flights were canceled at Midway Airport, and a handful of flights were delayed about an hour, she said.

Ice was as much as 2 1/2 centimeters thick on tree limbs and power lines in parts of the region.

Schools across Oklahoma were closed and some hospitals were relying on backup power generators. The Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Army Corps of Engineers sent 50 generators and three truckloads of bottled water from Texas to distribute to blacked-out areas of Oklahoma.

Tulsa International Airport had no power for about 10 hours and halted flight operations for the day, and most morning flights at Will Rogers World Airport in Oklahoma City were canceled because of icy runways. *AP*

Media tycoon Black sentenced to 6.5 years in jail

CHICAGO—DISGRACED MEDIA tycoon Conrad Black was sentenced to six and a half years in jail on Monday for raiding his company's coffers and trying to cover up his crime.

"You've committed a very serious crime, Mr. Black," Judge Amy St. Eve told the former media mogul as she imposed the jail term as well as a fine of $125,000.

Black was also ordered to forfeit some $6.1 million to the government, some of which could be distributed to victims.

"I frankly cannot understand how someone of your stature ... could engage in the conduct you engaged in." It was a spectacular fall for the defiant Black, 63, who continues to profess his innocence and vows to return to professional life despite being found guilty on four counts of fraud and one of obstruction of justice.

Some of his supporters have portrayed Black as a man betrayed by his closest allies and victimized by overzealous prosecutors. Others have likened him to Orson Welles's film character Citizen Kane.

Black, who did not testify at trial, spoke briefly before his sentencing of his disappointment and regret that the empire he built from the ground up had collapsed after he was ousted.

"I do wish to express very profound regret and sadness at the severe hardship suffered by all the shareholders, including employees, by the evaporation of $1.85 billion in shareholder value under my successors," he said.

The judge released him on a bond giving him 12 weeks to sort out his affairs before reporting directly to prison, sometime early in 2008.

The son of a wealthy brewery executive, Black bought his first newspaper in his twenties and rapidly expanded his reach across the globe, buying such prestigious titles as the Daily Telegraph, the Jerusalem Post and the Chicago Sun-Times.

Black's willingness to flaunt his wealth and privilege, his conservative views and his buccaneer business acumen alienated his more self-effacing fellow Canadians long before he renounced his citizenship to become a British lord in 2000.

The ostentatious Lord Black of Crossharbour was known for throwing lavish parties and counted celebrities, cardinals and statesmen among his friends. *AFP*

BLACK AP

Iraq rejects US bases

BAGHDAD—IRAQ WILL NEVER allow the United States to keep permanent military bases on its soil, the government's national security adviser has said.

"We need the United States in our war against terrorism, we need them to guard our border sometimes, we need them for economic support and we need them for diplomatic and political support," Mowaffaq al-Rubaie said.

"But I say one thing, permanent forces or bases in Iraq for any foreign forces is a red line that cannot be accepted by any nationalist Iraqi," he said, speaking to Dubai-based al Arabiya television in an interview broadcast late on Monday.

The United States has around 160,000 troops in Iraq, officially under a United Nations mandate enacted after the US-led invasion in 2003.

Iraq formally asked the United Nations on Monday to renew that mandate for a year until the end of 2008 but made clear it would not extend it beyond next year, and that the mandate could be revoked sooner at Iraq's request. *Reuters*

Malaysia detains Anwar, arrests 12 protesters

KUALA LUMPUR—MALAYsian authorities on Tuesday detained opposition figure Anwar Ibrahim at the capital's airport and arrested at least 12 protesters who defied a ban on handing a petition to parliament.

The incidents were the latest moves in a government crackdown on its critics who have organized a series of street demonstrations that have drawn tens of thousands and sent shockwaves through the nation.

Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said on Monday he was willing to sacrifice public freedom to maintain national security, justifying the arrests of dozens of people on charges including attempted murder and sedition.

Anwar, the former deputy premier who became a vocal government critic after being sacked and jailed in 1998, said he was held for an hour at Kuala Lumpur's international airport (KLIA) after returning from a trip to Turkey.

"I was detained by immigration officials at KLIA this morning and wish to state that the authorities have placed my name on a 'suspect blacklist,'" he said.

"I think it is a sustained effort to harass opposition leaders," he added, describing the crackdown as a government attempt "to deflect from the core issues of endemic corruption, high crime rates and a poor economy." An immigration spokesperson said he had no knowledge of Anwar's detention at the airport, but that names for the blacklist are usually provided by police.

Keadilan officials said however that the move was linked to his involvement in the Bersih electoral reform movement which staged a mass rally last November as well as Tuesday's petition protest.

More than 400 police surrounded the parliament to block the electoral reform campaigners who were forced to march there on foot after all roads leading to the building were closed off, causing traffic chaos in Kuala Lumpur.

Police said 12 people had been arrested, including several members of Anwar's Keadilan party and one from the hardline Islamic party PAS, while Keadilan said 21 had been detained, including a 13-year-old boy. *AFP*

PUTIN'S PICK

Russian President Vladimir Putin named First Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev as his preferred candidate in the March 2 presidential polls called to elect a successor after the Kremlin leader steps down

Dmitry Medvedev
Born Sept. 14, 1965

- 1965 Born in Putin's home city, St Petersburg
- 1987 Graduates from law faculty of St Petersburg University – Putin's alma mater
- 1991 - 96 Combines work of lecturing with job of expert for St Petersburg town hall's foreign relations committee, then headed by Putin
- 1999 Moves to Moscow as government's chief of staff
- 2000 After Putin's election, he becomes Kremlin deputy chief of staff, adding to that senior jobs in state-controlled companies, including chairman of the board of Gazprom
- 2003 Named first deputy prime minister, in charge of programmes intended to turn oil and gas revenues into better medicine, housing, agriculture, construction and culture
- Widely seen as a more liberal part of Putin's entourage, although has consistently refrained from stating political views outside designated area of social programmes

REUTERS

Putin anoints longtime ally as presidential frontrunner

MOSCOW—PRESIDENT VLADimir Putin endorsed technocrat ally Dmitry Medvedev as his successor on Monday in a surprise announcement that could clear the way for the Kremlin leader to retain power behind the throne.

Putin, whose support is seen as virtually guaranteeing victory in a March 2, 2008, presidential election, threw his weight behind Medvedev, a longtime ally who chairs gas behemoth Gazprom and serves as first deputy prime minister.

The choice surprised observers because Medvedev is a relative liberal in the Kremlin and unlike most of Putin's allies is not known to have served in the Soviet KGB. Although touted in the media as a possible successor he has never suggested he wanted the job.

"I have known him for more than 17 years, I have worked with him closely all these years, and I completely and fully support this candidacy," Putin said on state-run Channel One after four political parties nominated Medvedev.

In Washington the White House shrugged off questions about the appointment, with spokesperson Dana Perino telling reporters it was an "internal" matter.

The nomination followed months of intrigue over who would succeed 55-year-old Putin when he steps down next year after two consecutive terms at the head of the nuclear power and leading global energy exporter.

"On March 2, 2008, Medvedev will become the third president of Russia," news site www.gazeta.ru wrote.

Analysts said the choice of the baby-faced Medvedev, 42, would help Putin keep his options open in retaining authority.

Options considered most likely for Putin include becoming prime minister, heading the Kremlin Security Council, or even taking over as chief of a new state combining Russia and ex-Soviet republic Belarus—which Putin is due to visit Thursday and Friday.

Heading a program of government social projects, Medvedev is outside the circle of hawkish officials dominating the Kremlin and he owes his entire career to Putin.

"Medvedev is incapable of forming his own clan and he will always need Putin," Yury Korgunyuk, at the Indem Foundation, said.

Vladimir Pribylovsky, at the Panorama think tank, said Medvedev was loyal and "guarantees Putin the status quo."

The Moscow stock market's RTS index rose 1.62 percent to 2,323.37 points on the news, while shares in state-owned Gazprom, the world's biggest gas company, shot up three percent.

Alexei Sidorenko, at the Moscow Carnegie Centre, said that Putin could still allow a rival candidate to emerge. "It's not the last surprise of this presidential campaign."

However, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said such a development was "unlikely. (Putin) quite openly gave his support to one candidate."

Boris Nemtsov, one of the leaders of Russia's enfeebled liberal opposition, attacked Medvedev's nomination as "humiliating for the people, when the authorities determine who needs to be supported," Interfax reported.

Most observers had been expecting Putin to give his choice next Monday when his United Russia party, which swept to a controversial landslide in elections last weekend.

Putin took pains to emphasize the support from Medvedev from four parties—United Russia, A Just Russia, the Agrarians and Civic Force.

"This gives a chance to create the conditions for carrying out the course that has brought results all these last eight years," Putin said. *AFP*

Fujimori claims he's innocent of charges

LIMA—FORMER PRESIDENT Alberto Fujimori angrily denied ordering death squads to kill suspected leftists in Peru's civil war as he went on trial on Monday, and said he saved the country from the threat of communism.

"I reject the charges entirely. I'm innocent," Fujimori shouted angrily while pointing at a panel of three Supreme Court judges.

Fujimori, 69, is accused of sending a military death squad to carry out the La Cantuta massacre, in which 10 people were snatched from a university, murdered and buried in a shallow grave in 1992 for allegedly collaborating with left-wing guerrillas.

He is also on trial for two kidnappings and the Barrios Altos murders in 1991, when 15 people were gunned down at a family barbecue, among them an 8-year-old boy.

The normally composed Fujimori appeared tense from the trial's opening session and exploded when allowed to respond to the charges.

"As a result of my government, the human rights of 25 million Peruvians are respected," Fujimori yelled. "If there were exceptions, I condemn them, but I didn't not order them."

A judge told him to calm down and the afternoon's proceedings were canceled when a court doctor said Fujimori was suffering from symptoms of "chronic hypertension."

FUJIMORI REUTERS

Fujimori faces up to 30 years in prison and $33 million in fines if found guilty. The trial is at a police barracks where the former president is being held and is scheduled to resume on Wednesday.

Fujimori took power in 1990 when a Maoist insurgency known as the Shining Path was trying to take over the Andean country.

His supporters say it is unfair to prosecute a man who ended the vicious guerrilla war and tamed a chaotic economy during his decade-long rule.

But human rights activists view the televised trial as a turning point in a country long hobbled by a weak judicial system, impunity for the powerful, and painful memories of a civil war that killed tens of thousands of people. *Reuters*

WHAT'S INSIDE

■ **13 RP** finalists defend boxing titles vs Thai foes /A30

SPORTS
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Swimmers shine again but RP still 5th overall

DENISE Dy and Cecil Mamiit discuss a few points on the way to beating the Malaysian pair of Adam Jaya and Jawairiah Noodin in the mixed doubles, 6-3, 7-5. RAFFY LERMA

JAMES Walsh acknowledges the gallery after nailing the men's 200m butterfly gold. REUTERS

Filipinos snare 2 cycling golds

By Ernesto A. Gonzales
Sports Features Editor

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—Parading another star in Fil-American JB Walsh, swimming matched the two-gold effort by cycling as the Philippines finished with seven victories Tuesday that did little to get the defending overall champion Philippines out of its fifth place hole Tuesday in the 24th Southeast Asian Games here.

24th SEA GAMES
6 • 15 DECEMBER 2007
NAKHON RATCHASIMA
THAILAND

Walsh smashed the six-year-old SEAG record in ruling the men's 200-meter butterfly, then combined with Miguel Molina, Ryan Arabejo and new RP swim sensation Daniel Coakley to secure the sport's final gold in the men's 4x100 individual medley. That capped the Filipinos' eight victories overall.

Former bikathon king Victor Espiritu finally crashed the winners' circle for the first time in three SEAG by topping the men's 40-kilometer points race late Monday and defending champion Alfie Catalan kept his 4-km individual pursuit title.

Felicisimo Nierras Jr. salvaged a gold for athletics in the men's 400 meters, Amaya Paz retained her women's compound individual title in archery and the men's epee squad scored anew as the Filipinos boosted their golden harvest to 29 with four days of competition left.

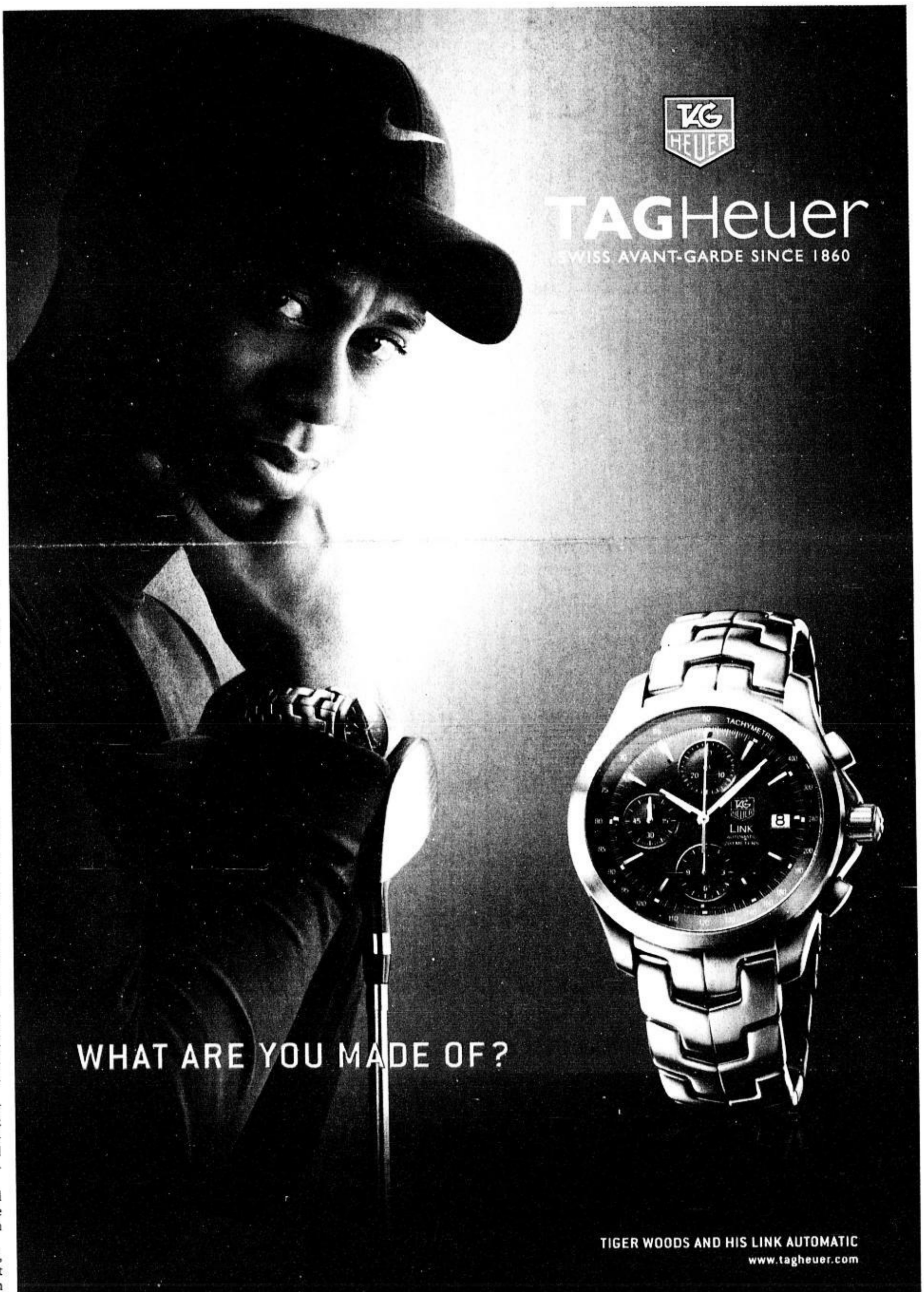
But the Filipinos stayed two golds behind Malaysia which captured a pair of golds at the start of the final swim program to keep fourth place. Indonesia was sixth with 25 victories.

As of 8:30 p.m. here (9:30 p.m. in Manila), the Thais moved closer to their overall target of 120 victories with 97 gold medals. Vietnam was glued in second with 46 followed by Singapore with 37.

Walsh shattered by 1.39 seconds the SEAG record of 2:01.84 set by Malaysia's Anthony Ang in 2001 in Kuala Lumpur.

Molina's individual winning streak earlier

RP SWIMMERS/ A31



Make way for new RP gold machine

By Musong R. Castillo

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—STEP aside wushu, move over athletics.

Swimming became the new gold medal machine of the Philippine contingent when Miguel Molina and his male buddies rewarded the country with eight victories as the curtains fell on the sport Tuesday in the 24th Southeast Asian Games here.

After winning only four golds back home in the 2005 Games, the swimmers doubled that output here with the 23-year-old Molina churning his way to four victories—three in the individual events and one in the relay—to cap his most successful stint in three editions of the biennial event.

Now with nine overall wins since the Vietnam SEAG in 2003, the US-based Molina is thinking of retiring from the sport with his young teammates here assuring him of their own gold-winning ways.

All in their teens, Ryan Arabejo, Daniel Coakley and JB Walsh accounted for four gold medals among themselves with the 18-year-old Arabejo striking for two in the 200-meter backstroke and the 1,500 freestyle.

Swiftest swimmer

Walsh delivered in the 200 butterfly while Coakley, two days short of turning 18, crowned himself as the swiftest swimmer of them all by ruling the 50-meter freestyle and breaking the SEAG and national records with his time of 22.8 seconds. That time also qualified him for the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Together with Molina, the three picked up another gold in the 4 x 100 medley relay with a time of 3:49.28.

Old 200 freestyle rival

Molina earlier prevailed in the 400 and 200 individual medley and the 200 breaststroke, the same event which he captured two years ago. His win in the relay came after he had settled for third in the 200 freestyle won by his old rival Malaysian Daniel Bego.

"I just wanted to keep it close (in the breaststroke leg) knowing that Walsh and Coakley were unbeatable," said Molina of his strategy in the medley relay.

Walsh, 19, clocked 2:00.45 as he bounced back from a narrow lose to Indonesian Donny Utomo the last time around.

Naturalized swimmers

Singapore, with the help of naturalized swimmers from China, emerged overall champion with 11 golds, but RP's eight was a big boost as it easily surpassed athletics' five-gold haul and wushu's two golds.

In the 2007 Manila SEAG, wushu garnered 11 golds and athletics nine.

The Harbour Centre-Philippine team shoots for its third straight win against Malaysia while the embattled lady dribblers go up against their Malaysian counterparts Wednesday.

MOST GOLDS: Miguel Molina celebrates after RP's 4x100 IM relay victory. RAFFY LERMA

13 RP finalists defend boxing title vs Thai foes

By Recah Trinidad

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—CAN THE RP boxing team, which fielded only its second-ranked men's squad, upset highly favored Thailand in a championship slug-out and help revive hopes of defending champion Philippines finishing at least third overall in the 24th Southeast Asian Games here?

The 17-strong RP boxing team sent in three more winners to make it a total of 13 boxers—seven men and six women—in the gold-medal round, missing out in only four weight classes following a 3-1 charge at the close of the semifinal round on Tuesday.

However, all 13 Filipino finalists will be up against top-rated rivals from Thailand's Team A, which was a perfect 17-for-17 in moving into the final round that starts at the Mueangpug Municipal Stadium on Wednesday.

With 10 fighters already in the finals, bantamweight Junel Cantancio swamped Quoc Viet Tran of Vietnam, 20-13, burly lightweight Joegen Ladon mauled Malaysian Paulus Paunandes, 16-3, and light heavyweight Maximino-Tabangcora rolled past Laotian Sisoupnanh Lavilaiseng, 13-8, to complete the finals cast for the RP team.

Despite the strong charge, signs of what to expect in the men's division's gold-medal slug-out between RP and Thailand surfaced yesterday with the mandhandling suffered by light flyweight Albert Pabila at the hands of Amnat Ruenroeng, 8-18.

THE PHILIPPINES' Joegin Ladon lands a punch against Paunandes Paulus of Malaysia. RAFFY LERMA

In two earlier bouts against Thai opponents, welterweight Wilfredo Lopez was stopped cold in the first round, while flyweight Bill Vicera was overwhelmed and outscored in three rounds.

There's a greater chance of the RP women boxers—majority of them champions in the 2003 Games—landing gold medals in the six finals contest they arranged with Thai foes.

This could not, however, be said of the RP men finalists, which were culled from the inferior Team B after officials decided to pull out fighters that included Olympics qualifier Harry Tañamor.

With its strong march to the final round, hopes are now pinned on the RP boxing team to deliver the gold medals to boost the RP delegation's desperate bid to salvage at least a third-best finish.

The fielding of a weaker men's squad here was seen as one big step backward in RP boxing team's defense of its championship in the biennial Games.

RP batters eye 3rd win vs Burmese today

The standings: Thailand 3-0; **Philippines 2-0**; Indonesia 3-1; Myanmar 1-2; Malaysia 1-2; Cambodia 0-4.

By Ernesto A. Gonzales

BANGKOK—THAILAND, THE ONLY THREAT TO the Philippines' baseball reign in Southeast Asian Games, surged to its third straight victory to grab the solo lead with a 6-1 win over Burma (Myanmar) on Tuesday at the Queen Sirikit Sports Center.

The Thais needed a four-run explosion in the sixth inning to forge ahead of the Filipinos, who are expected to match their 3-0 start against the same Burmese squad in the first game of a doubleheader on Wednesday.

Malaysia won the day's other match, turning back a fighting Cambodian side, 11-7, behind a seven-run explosion in the fifth frame.

The Filipinos were beaten by the hosts in the Asian Games last year but remain the solid favorites here as they still have to yield a run while amassing a total of 45 in two games that they decided after only five innings.

They got going with a 31-0 blanking of Malaysia Friday before whipping Cambodia, 14-0, Monday.

In contrast, the Thais had to scramble past Indonesia, 6-1, although they also humbled the Cambodians with an abbreviated 16-0 win.

After Myanmar, the Filipinos take on the Indonesians on Thursday before going up against the Thais in an expected winner-take-all showdown on Friday.

Big RP gold heroes sizzle in from the kitchen

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—WANT A bit of spicy news about the shaky, sinking Philippine sports mission to this placid, charming capital?

Malacañang may not be aware of it, but our gallant team of Filipino chefs has already pocketed the gold medal at the crowded mess hall of the Athletes Village here.

That medal, being unofficial, cannot shore RP up in the rugged race for overall honors but, before grizzled politicians in the national sports hierarchy start passing the buck again, please give our chefs and nutritionists from University of Santo Tomas and College of St. Benilde a round of applause.

Take it from Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose Cojuangco, who confirmed that favorite Filipino dishes prepared by RP chefs were being voraciously patronized by foreign contingents.

* * *

In fact, Cojuangco reported with unconcealed glee how Filipino athletes complained about the unavailability of their favorite native dishes, like *adobo* and *tinola*, upon their return to the Village from various competition fields.

This only means that Peping Cojuangco, or whoever called the shots, should send the same RP Cooking Team to defend the baker's gold in the 2009 Southeast Asian Games in Laos.

Of course, Cojuangco et al have bigger things to worry about now that the Philippines, the defending overall champion, has been forced to assume the role of medal scavenger in the current Games.

This pitiful role was typified by no less than the RP chief of mission, Rep. Monico Puentevella, who lingered around the swimming venue close to the Main Stadium Monday evening praying for at least a couple of gold medals.

* * *

Being a very religious person, Puentevella, newly returned from a European swing with President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, was not very surprised when RP swimmers delivered not just two, but three shining golds from the pool on Monday.

For the record, Puentevella had told members of the Filipino media here that, since they had given up the ghost of retaining overall title, Her Excellency, Ms Arroyo, would be glad enough with a runner-up finish.

Or, maybe, even only a third best in the overall medal standings.

His prayers were heard. But Puentevella had a rude awakening upon reading the medal tally the morning after.

The Philippines had slipped to a dismal fifth overall in the medal standings.

* * *

Well, as things stood close to the end of competitions on Tuesday, RP finishing a poor third behind Thailand and sensational Vietnam could be considered commendable.

The truth, Puentevella confessed, was that RP would need a few minor miracles in order to achieve a third-overall finish in this biennial test of lineage and sporting supremacy.

Singapore yesterday appeared immovable at third slot, followed by resurgent Malaysia.

A bigger specter was Indonesia, previously ranked an also-ran, threatening to overtake RP in the gold-medal race.

* * *

Naturally, they were already preparing alibis for the impending debacle.

Puentevella was himself overheard as saying funds had been scarce for this expedition.

There was also this wild shot pointing to boxing which, it was said, could've helped grandly in the fight for medals had it sent its best fighters, instead of fielding groping members of its Class B team.

All told, this venture which was supposed to show the right direction RP sports had supposedly taken following its triumph in the 2005 Games, has deteriorated into another tired, sickening diagnosis of national sporting ills.

The situation was so rotten beleaguered RP sports officials have had to drum up the selfless, solemn efforts of underrated Filipino chefs in the Athletes Village.

Our biggest heroes out here may yet emerge from the kitchen.

Filipino medalists
(As of Dec. 10, 2007)

GOLD

1. Joey Barba, Mountain Bike (Men's Downhill)
2. Ryan Arabejo, Swimming (Men's 200m Back)
3. Miguel Molina, Swimming (Men's 400m Indiv. Medley)
4. Rene Herrera, Athletics (Men's 3000m Steeplechase)
5. Arniel Ferrera, Athletics (Men's Hammer Throw)
6. Benjamin Tolentino Jr. and Jose Rodriguez, Rowing (Men's Double Sculls)
7. Ryan Mendoza, Triathlon (Men's Duathlon)
8. Marestella Torres, Athletics (Women's Long Jump)
9. Emmanuel Reyes and Maira Rosete, Dance Sport (Standard Quickstep)
10. E. Reyes and M. Rosete, Dance Sport, (Standard Tango)
11. Michelle Bruzola, Fencing (Women's Individual Epee)
12. Emerson Segui, Fencing (Men's Individual Foil)
13. Antonio Gabica and Marlon Manalo, Billiards and Snooker (Men's 9-Ball Doubles)
14. Miguel Molina, Swimming (Men's 200m Indiv. Medley)
15. B. Tolentino, Rowing (Men's Lightweight Singles Sculls)
16. Rubilen Amit, Billiards (Women's 9-Ball Pool Singles)
17. Mariane Mariano, Wushu (Women's Under 60kg)
18. Willy Wang, Wushu (Men's Nanquan, 3 events combined)
19. Henry Dagmil, Athletics (Men's Long Jump)
20. Daniel Coakley, Swimming (Men's 50m Free)
21. Miguel Molina, Swimming (Men's 200m Breast)
22. Ryan Arabejo, Swimming (Men's 1500m Free)
23. Victor Espiritu, Track Cycling (Men's Points Race)
24. Amaya Paz, Archery (Women's Individual Compound)
25. Julius Felicisimo Nierras Jr., Athletics (Men's 400m)
26. Armando Bernal, Avelino Victorino Jr., Almario Vizcayno and Wilfredo Vizcayno Jr., Fencing (Men's Team Epee)
27. Alfie Catalan, Track Cycling (Men's Individual Pursuit)
28. James Walsh, Swimming (Men's 200m Butterfly)
29. Miguel Molina, Daniel Coakley, James Walsh and Ryan Arabejo, Swimming (Men's 4x100 Medley Relay)

SILVER

1. Eric Ang, Carag Carlos and Jethro Dionisio, Shooting (Men's Trap Team)
2. Jaqueline De Guzman, Shooting (Women's Skeet)
3. Paul Brian Rosario, Patricio Bernardo and Gabriel Tong, Shooting (Men's Skeet Team)
4. Mary Grace Milgar, Athletics (Women's 400m Hurdles)
5. Julius Sermona, Athletics (Men's 500m)
6. Rosie Villarito, Athletics (Women's Javelin Throw)
7. Eusebio Quinones, Mountain Bike (Men's Cross Country)
8. Alvin Amposta and Nestor Cordova, Rowing (Men's Lightweight Double Sculls)
9. Marcus Valda, Wrestling (Men's Freestyle 84kg)
10. Midel Dique, Athletics (Men's 800m)
11. Harlene Orendain, Fencing (Women's Individual Epee)
12. Gemma Silverio, Wrestling (Women's Freestyle 59kg)
13. Alven Aragon, Wrestling (Men's Freestyle 74kg)
14. Jimmy Angana , Wrestling (Men's Freestyle 66kg)
15. Nida Cordova and Midelie Gabiligno, Rowing (Women's Double Sculls)
16. George Vilog, Triathlon (Men's Event)
17. Alessandra Araullo, Triathon (Women's Event)
18. Reyes and Rosete, Dance Sport (Standard Viennese Waltz)
19. Reyes and Rosete, Dance Sport (Standard Slow Foxtrot)
20. John Erolle Melencio and Dearlie Gerodias, Dance Sport (Latin American Jive)
21. J. Melencio and D. Gerodias, Dance Sport (Latin American Paso Doble)
22. Walbert Mendoza, Fencing (Men's Individual Sabre)
23. James Walsh, Swimming (Men's 100m Butterfly)
24. Miguel Molina, Daniel Coakley, Kendrick Uy and James Walsh, Swimming (Men's 4x100m Freestyle Relay)
25. Julius Sermona, Athletics (Men's 1000m)
26. Mary Jane Estmar, Wushu (Women's Under 52 kg)
27. Benjie Rivera, Wushu (Men's Under 56 kg)
28. Mark Denver Atienza, Rolando Canlas Jr., Ramil Endriano and Emerson Segui, Fencing (Men's Team Foil)
29. Mary Rose Alfonso, Joanna Franquelli, Ma. Wendelyn Mendoza, Lenita Otadoy, Fencing (Women's Team Sabre)
30. Earl Benjamin Yap, Archery (Men's Individual Compound)
31. Danilo Fresnido, Athletics (Men's Javelin Throw)
32. Deborah Samson, Athletics (Women's Pole Vault)
33. Mia Allyson Howell, Michelle Mancenido, Veena Tessa Nuestro and Ma. Dinah Remolacio, Fencing (Women's Team Foil)
34. Water Polo (Men)
35. Renante Briones, Weightlifting (Men's 94 kg)
36. Edward Dalwa, Walbert Mendoza, Gian Carlo Nocom and Edmon Velez, Fencing (Men's Team Sabre)
37. Nancy Quillotes, Judo (Women's -48kg)
38. Rugby (Men)
39. Erica Totten, Swimming (Women's 200m Butterfly)

BRONZE

1. Emerito Concepcion, Shooting (Men's 10m Air Rifle)
2. Men's Hoop, Sepak Takraw
3. Women's Hoop, Sepak Takraw
4. Eliezer Sunang, Athletics (Men's Shot Put)
5. Jobert Delicano, Athletics (Men's Triple Jump)
6. Nino Surban, Mountain Bike (Men's Cross Country)
7. Marites Bitbit, Mountain Bike (Women's Cross Country)
8. Maribel Jambora, Wrestling (Women's Freestyle 48kg)
9. Ma. Cristina Vergara, Wrestling (Women's Freestyle 51kg)
10. Clotheide Nillas and Johnalyn Pedrita, Rowing (Women's Lightweight Double Sculls)
11. Frederick Taino and Cecil Mamiit, Tennis (Men's Team)
12. Denise Dy and Diane Matias, Tennis (Women's Team)
13. August Benedicto, Triathlon (Men's Duathlon)
14. Analiza Dysangco, Triathlon (Women's Duathlon)
15. Reyes and Rosete, Dance Sport (Standard Waltz)
16. Reynato Rener Mercado and Judith Anne Melencio, Dance Sport (Latin American Cha Cha Cha)
17. Rolando Canlas Jr., Fencing (Men's Individual Foil)
18. Joanna Franquelli, Fencing (Women's Individual Sabre)
19. Arnold Villarube, Athletics (Men's Decathlon)
20. Junrey Bano, Julius Felicisimo Nierras Jr., Rodrigo Tanuan Jr. and Ernie Candelario, Athletics (Men's 4x400 Relay)
21. Kendrick Uy, Swimming (Men's 100m Free)
22. Jaclyn Pangilinan, Swimming (Women's 100m Breast)
23. Nicole Santiago, Jaclyn Pangilinan, Georgina Gandionco and Erica Totten, Swimming (Women's 4x100m Freestyle Relay)
24. Eduardo Buenavista, Athletics (Men's Marathon)
25. Jho Ann Banayag, Athletics (Women's Marathon)
26. Jose Rodriguez, Rowing (Men's Single Sculls)
27. Arland Macasieb, Triathlon (Men)
28. Maria Meliza Lucas, Triathlon (Women)
29. Hidilyn Diaz, Weightlifting (Women's 58 kg)
30. Margarito Angana, Wrestling (Men's Freestyle 55 kg)
31. Daniel Pakantac, Wushu (Men's Taijiquan-2 events)
32. Janice Hung, Wushu (Women's Taijiquan-2 events)
33. Bill Vicente Vicera, Boxing (Men's Pin 45kg)
34. M. Bitbit, Road Cycling (Women's Individual Time Trial)
35. J. Melencio and D. Gerodias, Dance Sport (Latin American Samba)
36. Claro Roland, Muay Thai (Flyweight 51 kg)
37. Rene Catalan, Wushu (Men's Under 52 kg)
38. Michelle Mancenido and Veena Tessa Nuestro (tie), Fencing (Women's Individual Foil)
39. Edmon Velez, Fencing (Men's Individual Sabre)
40. Ryan Arabejo, Swimming (Men's 400m Freestyle)
41. Reynato Rener Mercado and Judith Anne Melencio, Dance Sport (Latin American Cha Cha Cha)
42. Robert Andrew Garcia, Squash (Men's Singles)
43. Roque Mana-ay Jr., Wrestling (Men's Freestyle 60kg)
44. Michelle Bruzola, Ma. del Carmen Galvez, Mary Catherine Kong and Harlene Orendain, Fencing (Women's Team Epee)
45. Romnick Ghie Pabalate, Muay Thai (Light Fly 48 kg)
46. Jul-Omar Abdulhakim, Pencak Silat (Men's Under 50kg)
47. Emraida Asmad, Pencak Silat (Women's Under 55kg)
48. Laruan Zaidi, Muay Thai (Feather 57kg)
49. Emerson Obiena, Athletics (Men's Pole Vault)
50. Jan Paul Morales, Cycling Track (Men's 1km Time Trial)
51. Jaclyn Pangilinan, Swimming (Women's 200m Breast)
52. Erica Totten, Swimming (Women's 200m Free)
53. Daniel Parantac, Wushu (Men's Taijiquan-2 events)
54. Mercedita Manipol, Athletics (Women's 10,000m)
55. Narcisa Atienza, Athletics (Women's Heptathlon)
56. Albert Pabila, Boxing (Light Fly 48kg)
57. Olod Jay, Muay Thai (Light 60 kg)
58. Harold Gregorio Jay, Muay Thai (Men's Welter 67kg)
60. Dulce Purungganan, Bodybuilding (Women's Fitness)

RP swimmers shine again...

From page A29

ended at three as he settled for the bronze in the men's 200 freestyle. But he was a winner when he plunged into action for the last time as the swimmer of the breaststroke leg.

Molina finished with one more victory than his golden output in 2005 to become the most successful RP campaigner so far.

Ryan Arabejo, the 200 and 1,500 freestyle winner, took care of the backstroke. Walsh swam the butterfly and 50m freestyle champion Coakley finished off the relay in style.

Boxing, now under pressure to deliver and help avoid an embarrassing finish for the Filipinos, placed three more fighters in the finals for a total of 13.

Experts, however, feel the Filipinos need no less than knockout wins against their Thai foes in the gold medal round starting Wednesday to avoid the infamous hometown decision here.

Bantamweight Junel Cantancio, lightweight Joegen Ladon and light heavyweight Maximino Tabangcora completed the cast of RP finalists after light fly Albert Pabila was eliminated by Thai Amnat Ruenroeng, 18-8.

The other gold medal hopefuls are flyweight Godfrey Castro, light welter Jerry Semillano, featherweight Orlando Tacuyan, middleweight Junie Tizon and female fighters Annie Albania, Alice Kate Aparri, Jouvilet Chilem, Annaliza Cruz, Mitchelle Martinez and Ronijen Sofla.

There was mixed results in golf with the women's team, led by Anya Tanpinco, taking a two-stroke lead over Thailand after the first round of the 54-hole competition, 143-145.

But the Putra Cup champion Thais bounced back in the men's division, opening a six-shot edge over Indonesia, 422-428, even as the Filipinos, who led on the first day, tumbled down to fourth at 429 with Anthony Fernando adding a 77 to the 71 of Mark Fernando and the 72 of Ferdinand Aunzo.

Nierras, whose father was a former national standout in the jumping events, succeeded teammate Jimar Aing as 400 champion with a time of 46.56. Ernie Candelario, the winner in Vietnam in 2004, slumped to sixth in 48.09.

That win gave the athletics team its poorest output of four in three SEAGs. The squad came up with eight golds in Vietnam and nine in 2005 back home.

Paz beat Indonesian Dellie Threesyadinda for the gold, 116-114, while the epee squad won with a team featuring Almario Vizcayno, who took over the old slot of actor Richard Gomez, Armando Bernal, Wilfredo Vizcayno Jr. and Avelino Victorino.

But the fencing squads in foil and saber ended up with silvers.

Also settling for the silver were Earl Benjamin Yap in the men's compound individual in archery, pole-vaulter Deborah Samson and weightlifting's Renante Briones in the 94 kg.

SEA GAMES Medal Tally

COUNTRY	G	S	B
Thailand	97	87	71
Vietnam	46	29	54
Singapore	37	30	29
Malaysia	31	29	57
Philippines	29	40	60
Indonesia	25	34	50
Myanmar	4	15	25
Laos	4	1	22
Cambodia	2	3	6
Brunei	0	1	2
Timor Leste	0	0	0

Nierras ends athletics rout

By Musong R. Castillo

NAKHON RATCHASIMA, THAILAND—Julius Nierras made up for the shock defeat of Danilo Fresnido in the javelin by ruling the 400-meter run at the close of the athletics competition at the 24th Southeast Asian Games here on Tuesday.

After topping his semifinal heat on Monday, Nierras, son of a former national jumper, clocked 46.56 seconds in a wild, wild finish to nip Jukkatip Pojaroen (46.64) of Thailand for his first SEAG gold.

Muhamad Zaiful Zainal Abiding of Malaysia was third in 46.75, while Ernie Candelario, the 2003 king of this event, was sixth in 48.09.

Nierras' victory put the RP athletics gold harvest at five at His Majesty the King's 80th Birth Anniversary Stadium here—well short of the promised 10 gold medals.

The heavily favored Fresnido, who was trying to win for the third straight Games, chalked up 68.14 meters in his fourth try and settled for second to Thai Sanya Buanthong's 68.65. Nontach Palanupat made it a Thai 1-3 after throwing 67.76.

There were more failures than success on the final day for the Filipinos and John Lozada as Rene Herrera wound up fifth and sixth, respectively, in the 1,500-meter finals won by Vietnam's Dihn Cuong Nguyen in 3:45.31.

NIERRAS RAFFY LERMA

Merceditas Manipol was knocked off her 10,000 throne by a fast-starting Indonesian Triyaningsih, who won in 34:07.35.

Manipol clocked 35:05.57 with the veteran Pa Pa of Myanmar finishing second in 34.39.98.

Athletics finished with six gold, seven silver and 13 bronze medals, a far cry from the nine golds it contributed to the Philippines' maiden overall romp in Manila two years ago, but respectable enough according to Patafa officials.

"Though we fell a little short of target, I am very proud of my athletes who fought hard for the country," Patafa head Go Teng Kok, said.

Filipinos also joined the record-shattering frenzy, with Henry Dagmil shading his 2005 long jump mark of 7.81 with a golden leap for 7.87 Monday afternoon and Arniel Ferrera throwing the hammer to a distance of 60.98 meters for another new SEAG mark.

Tanpinco's 70 lifts RP ladies; men drop to 4th

By Musong R. Castillo

BONANZA RANCH KHAOYAI—THE Philippine men's team sputtered on the second day of golf action in the 24th Southeast Asian Games, chalking up just a combined 220 to drop out of the lead to fourth place, now seven behind the hot Thailand squad.

Mark Fernando bounced back from a mediocre opening round with a one-under-par 71 and Ferdinand Aunzo was steady with a 72, but the Filipinos had to count a 77 by brilliant first-round performer Anthony Fernando for a two-day aggregate of 429.

Saving the day for the Philippines was the women's team, which assembled a 143 built around veteran Anya Tanpinco's 70—good for the lead in both team and individual plays at the long, windswept Bonanza Golf and Country Club here.

"We all played bad," Mark Fernando, one of two National Caddies' Open products in the all-rookie team, said in Filipino. "At least we still have time to catch up."

So off form were the Filipinos that Jonel Ababa, who had a 70 on Monday, skied to a 79 and failed to count.

Thailand, which won the Putra Cup at The Country Club in Sta. Rosa, Laguna two weeks ago, finished with a flourish with its last three players shooting a combined seven under in the last three holes.

Pipatpong Naewsuk finished birdie-birdie-eagle for his 66 and K Aphibarmrat birdied his last two holes for a 67, which cushioned the 75 of Varut Chomchalam, who birdied the last hole as well.

Still in the hunt

"It's far from over," said non-playing skipper Caloy Coscoluella. "Seven down in a team competition is not that impossible to overhaul."

Naeswuk and Aphibarmat seized the lead with 138s, one up on Andik Mauludin, whose 71 led Indonesia's 218 for joint second with Malaysia at 428.

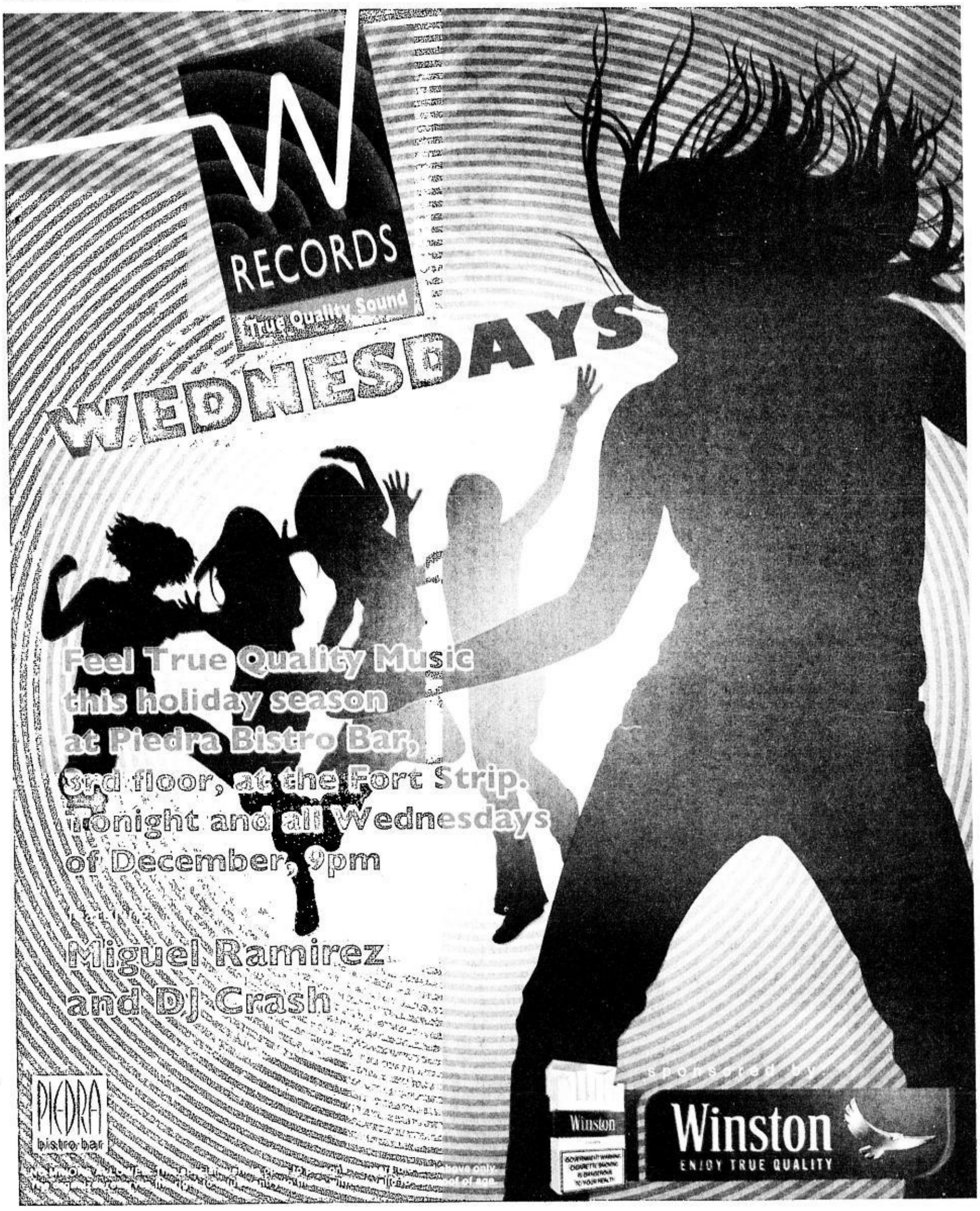
Malaysia turned in a 216 on the strength of Edmund Au's 70.

Yuniarto Bennita and Hardjito counted for Indonesia with 71s, while Malaysia drew a 72 from A.M. Nazari and a 74 from Amli Mohayideen.

Tanpinco, a member of the silver medal-winning Philippine team of 2005, actually made the turn at 33 only to drop one shot in her final nine holes. She took a one-shot lead over P Khongkraphan of Thailand in individual play.

Chihiro Ikeda backed up Tanpinco with a 73 and counted in the country's 143 while Y Kawinpakorn turned in a 74 for the second Thailand score for its 145.

The Philippines threw away Regina De Guzman's 77 while Thailand discarded the 76 of P Phuntumabamrung as only two of the three scores count for team play in the 54-hole event. Indonesia was in third with a 147 after the 73 of T Juriah Suharto and Jaya Lydia Ivana's 74.



Catalan, Espiritu bag cycling golds

VICTOR Espiritu (right) tows Stephen Pelaez in the 40km points race. RAFFY LERMA

By Musong R. Castillo

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—ALFIE CATALAN WON THE PHILIPPINES' THIRD cycling gold in the 24th Southeast Asian Games Tuesday night after ruling the men's individual pursuit at the velodrome of the His Majesty the King's 80th Birth Anniversary Main Stadium here.

Aboard a P120,000 bike, the 25-year-old Catalan was timed four minutes and 48.230 seconds for the 4,000-meter race, an effort that left no doubt that he won the gold unlike Monday night when Victor Espiritu agonized before winning the 40-km points race.

Amir Mustafa Rusli of Malaysia was second to Catalan, the pre-event favorite, in 4:49.594, while Pprojo Wasejo of Indonesia was the bronze medalist at 4:50.873.

"This is for the country," Catalan told reporters in Filipino.

The cycling delegation already surpassed its two-gold harvest in Manila two years ago and continued to improve, with Joey Barba sparking a Philippine charge on Thursday by upending a Thai ace in the downhill mountain bike race.

Espiritu, who had a total of 88 points, had to wait for almost an hour after the race late Monday night as Philippine team officials battled it out with jurors because of a seeming attempt to rob the Filipino of his win.

Catalan's gold was the second in as many days for cycling and its third for the Philippines in these Games counting Barba's breakthrough downhill championship last week.

The 33-year-old Espiritu had waited 10 years for a second SEA Games gold.

"How sweet it is," Espiritu, the Tour Pilipinas champion last summer, said in Filipino. "This is even sweeter than my first win. I've waited so long for this."

In the 1997 Jakarta Southeast Asian Games, Espiritu handily topped the individual time trials.

Espiritu, who won the Marlboro Tour in 1996, turned back two Thais for the gold: Prajak Mahawong grabbed the silver with 83 points and Thanawat the bronze (74).

Espiritu sprinted away right from the start and with teammates Stephen Pelaez and Ronald Gorrantes providing splendid defensive help, he overlapped the entire field twice.

Marites Bitbit, who settled for the bronze medal in the m- ntain bike cross-country and road's in- idual time trial, was still seeing action in - women's 30-km points race mint late Tuesday evening.

Cycling's other medals came from Eusebio Quiñones (silver in men's cross-country) and the bronze medals of Niño Surban in men's cross-country and Jan Paul Morales in track's 1-kilometer.

Espiritu said his win Monday was made possible because of his vast experience culled from a national pool stint that started when he was a junior rider in 1992.

"Our event is hard to predict because it depends on our condition," Espiritu said in Filipino. "Maybe I'm in top form or maybe I'm simply lucky."

Espiritu is currently looking forward to Thursday's road race, where he will team up with Warren Davadilla, Irish Valenzuela and Lloyd Reynante.

Confident RP cagers clash with Malaysians

GAMES WEDNESDAY
1 p.m.—Philippines vs Malaysia (W)
5 p.m.—Philippines vs Malaysia (M)

By Musong R. Castillo

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—WITH ITS biggest stumbling block out of the way, the fancied Philippine men's basketball team starts going through the motions of reaffirming its status as king of the sport in the Southeast Asian Games.

The Filipinos slug it out with Malaysia at 5 p.m. Wednesday (6 p.m. Manila time) at the Keelapirom Stadium here, and they are expected to waltz to their third straight blowout win and move within a victory of a title sweep.

But don't tell that to the coaching staff of the well-prepared squad.

"Our frame of mind remains the same," Junnel Baculi said during a break in practice on Tuesday. "We will treat all our opponents with respect. We don't want to be complacent."

Malaysia will come into the game the winner of two of its first three games, the last a 103-72 bombardment of Cambodia on Tuesday.

Baculi said that the virtual championship game in the round-robin tournament among five countries was between the RP five and Indonesia, which the Filipinos overwhelmed, 75-49, despite taking it easy from late in the third quarter on.

Before that, the Filipinos, bankrolled by the PBL's Harbour Centre squad, tore Cambodia to shreds, 136-82.

The Philippines is looking to win an eighth straight gold medal in the event since 1991.

"We have been reminding the players that they should always go for the kill," cage delegation head and Harbour Centre owner Mikee Romero said. "There will be no letup on our part until those gold medals are around our necks."

Meanwhile, the RP women's team tries to cling to its wafer-thin chances of bagging a first-ever gold in the Games when it clashes also with Malaysia in the 1 p.m. aperitif.

One successful shot at victory, a thousand reasons to claim fame

DANIEL COAKLEY: Surprise package RAFFY LERMA

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—THE country's latest swimming sensation could have made a splash even in the Olympics.

Daniel Coakley shattered the Southeast Asian Games record in the 50-meter freestyle by clocking 22.80 seconds, a mark that also turned out to be the eighth-best clocking in the finals of the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

"I'm simply overjoyed; that's all I can say," said Coakley after capturing the gold in the only individual event the Fil-Hawaiian joined in the 24th SEA Games.

Hawaiian father

Coakley, whose father is Hawaiian and mom is Filipino, accomplished the milestone three days short of his 18th birthday on Dec. 13

The feat also earned the 6-foot-1 Coakley a trip to the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games after meeting the Class B qualifying mark of 23.13 to join the elite ranks of teammates Miguel Molina, Ryan Arabejo and James Walsh.

"What Daniel did was awesome," said coach Pinky Brosas, a 1972 Munich Olympics veteran. "That was all pure talent."

Yldefonso great grandson

Coakley, the lean and chinky-eyed great grandson of only Filipino double Olympic medalist Teofilo Yldefonso, erased the two-year-old record of 23.76 seconds set by Ronald Guiriba not once, but twice, on the same day.

Before his gold-winning performance, Coakley registered 23.08 seconds in the morning heats.

"Even coach Jake Poppel fell off his seat when he saw what Daniel did," Brosas said, referring to the American swimming coach of the Arkansas University Razorbacks, who also handles Arabejo at Bolls High School.

Virtual unknown

Brosas disclosed he even debated with swimming chief Mark Joseph on Coakley's inclusion in the lineup since the virtual unknown teen was competing in only one event.

"In the end, I prevailed because I believe in this guy," said Brosas.

Even before his national team and SEAG debut, Coakley, a recent Kealakehe High School graduate, also owns the Hawaiian age-group freestyle records in the 9-10, 11-12 and 13-14-year-old brackets.

Hurting Toni hopes 3rd time's a charm

By Ernesto A. Gonzales

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—NERLYN Huinda got a chance to prevent a gold shutout for the Filipinos in pencak silat by beating the reigning world champion in the under 60 kg division on Monday.

The 5-foot-4 fighter from Roxas City, also the winner in the under 50 kg class in 2003, eliminated Malini Mohamad of Malaysia, 3-2, to reach the finals against Thailand's Noytapa Jundarat tomorrow.

"I'll try my best," said Huinda, the last Filipino standing from an original 13-man squad.

* * *

A third straight gold in her third tournament in three months.

Still hurting after securing an Olympic berth in a qualifying tournament in Vietnam last month, that target remains within reach for Marie Antoinette Rivero when taekwondo starts at the Vongchavalitkul University here.

Rivero is one of five defending champions expected to again shine for the taekwondo squad that won six times in Manila two years ago on top of five silvers and one bronze.

The other previous winners are bantamweight Tshomlee Go, finweight John Paul Lizardo, featherweight Kirstie Elaine Alora and women's bantam Esher Marie Singson.

Go clinched an Olympic slot during the world qualifiers last September in England, where Rivero also competed and barely missed securing a berth.

Rivero first became a SEAG champion in 2003, then made it to the 2004 Athens Olympics and last year's Asian Games in Doha, Qatar.

Also seeing action today are women's heavyweight Catherine Bunyi, women's middleweight Criselda Roxas, heavyweight Michael Alejandrino, middleweight Alex Briones and welterweight Ernesto Mendoza.

DOWN THE HILL RUBILEN Amit takes aim at the cue ball during her women's 8-ball semifinal match against Santhinee Suekul of Thailand. Amit's bid to defend her double-gold feat from the previous SEA Games came apart after she bowed to the Thai, in the decisive rack that broke a hill-hill tie. RAFFY LERMA

Amit crashes out; water polo, rugby teams settle for silver

By Musong R. Castillo

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—RUBILEN Amit failed in her bid for another golden double on Tuesday after getting knocked out in the semifinals of the women's 8-ball singles at the 24th Southeast Asian Games at the Sima Thani Hall here.

The 28-year-old Amit, who scored a sweep of the 9- and 8-ball singles in Manila in 2005 and who on Sunday repeated in the 9-ball, was upset by home bet Santhinee Jaisuekul in a hill-hill game, 7-6.

Jaisuekul was set to clash with the angelic-looking Indonesian, Angeline Magdalena Ticoalu, Amit's 9-ball finals victim, for the gold late Tuesday night.

Ticoalu, who bungled a 5-2 lead against Amit in the 9-ball finals on Sunday, took out Filipina Mary Ann Basas, 7-2, before bundling out second-seeded Zeet Huey Chai of Singapore, 7-4, in the semis.

In men's action, former double world champion Ronnie Alcano won his version of a hill-hill game and advanced to the semifinals of the men's 8-ball singles after a 9-8 nipping of Lian Han Toh of Singapore.

The 35-year-old Alcano, who won the World 9-Ball in 2006 in Manila, will next face WPC veteran Ibrahim Bin Amir of Malaysia in the final four. Bin Amir scored a similar 9-8 decision of Indonesian Ricky Yang.

Meanwhile, the Philippine men's water polo team drew with Thailand on Thursday, 10-10, and settled for the silver medal behind Singapore.

Ending up with a plus-24-point goal difference, the Filipinos bested the Indonesians, who scored 57 goals but gave up the same number for the bronze.

It was a respectable finish for the water polo squad, whose feat was duplicated by the rugby team made up mostly of Filipino-Australians.

The Filipino rugby team found the Thais too slippery in the second half of the gold medal match also Tuesday, being blanked in the period to lose, 28-14 at the Suranaree Camp Stadium.

Warongkorn Khankoet scored three of the four Thai goals, with the other coming from Parwej Jarounapat as Thailand overwhelmed the Philippines for another golden performance.

Starter Garet Holgate and Oliver Saunders scored the two Philippine points in the first half as the Filipinos looked headed for an upset win by holding the Thais to a 14-14 tie.

The Philippines also got the goods from Saunders in a 12-7 semifinal victory over Malaysia, while Thailand advanced to the gold medal match by making short work of Indonesia, 24-7.

In badminton, the mixed doubles pair of Kennie and Kennievic Asuncion marched into the quarterfinals after sweeping the Vietnamese tandem of Hoang Hai Nguyen and Thi Quynh Mai Phi, 21-19, 21-9.

The Asuncions, ranked 24th in the world, next face the second-ranked Indonesian team of Flandy Limpele and Vita Marissa for a place in the semifinals.

Mavs whip Knicks as Dirk waxes hot

NEW YORK—DIRK NOWITZKI SCORED A SEASON-HIGH 36 POINTS to steer the Dallas Mavericks to a 99-89 win over the New York Knicks on Monday.

Nowitzki hit 14 of 23 field-goal attempts, including three of five three-pointers, and was five of seven from the line as the Mavericks continued their domination of the Knicks.

He had 15 points in the first quarter to propel the Mavericks to a 28-19 lead.

"I was fortunate enough to find my rhythm very quickly," Nowitzki told reporters. "In the last couple of weeks, my jumper didn't really feel great. I didn't have a lot of really good looks."

Josh Howard added 22 and Jerry Stackhouse had 13.

But Dallas coach Avery Johnson was not happy with how some of the other Mavericks played as Dallas blew a large portion of a 23-point third quarter lead.

"The last three minutes in the third quarter were absolutely pathetic," Johnson told reporters. "We had some guys in there that let the team down, and we had to go back with Dirk, but give the Knicks some credit."

Zach Randolph scored all 24 of his points in the second half to pace New York. He also had 11 rebounds.

Jamal Crawford added 19 and Fred Jones 16 for the Knicks, who lost their third successive game.

The Knicks played without point guard Stephon Marbury. He continues to mourn the recent death of his father.

As usual with the Knicks, basketball was only part of the story. Madison Square Garden and Knicks coach Isiah Thomas reached an $11.5 million settlement in the sexual harassment case brought by former team executive Anucha Browne Sanders.

THOMAS: Case settled AP

In Orlando, Florida, Josh Smith had 25 points and a season-high 16 rebounds and Joe Johnson scored 24 points as the Atlanta Hawks won their third straight NBA game, 98-87, over the Orlando Magic.

The Hawks led for all but the opening 90 seconds, and held Orlando's prolific three-point shooters in check almost all game. Orlando shot a season-low 39.7 percent. The Hawks capitalized on 19 Magic turnovers for 29 points.

Hedo Turkoglu led Orlando with 22 points, while Dwight Howard had 14 points and 18 rebounds. Howard was just 6-of-14 from the free throw line.

Anthony Johnson had 15 points and five assists for Atlanta, and Smith added four blocks and five assists.

In Philadelphia, Andre Iguodala scored 16 points and Andre Miller had 17 points and 12 assists for the 76ers, who led by as many as 31 points in their third straight victory, a 100-88 pasting of the Houston Rockets.

Willie Green scored 20 points for the Sixers.

Houston's Tracy McGrady scored 12 points before leaving the game in the second half with a sprained right ankle. Bonzi Wells scored 24 points, Luther Head had 18 and Yao Ming 12 for the Rockets.

Kyle Korver's three-pointer capped a 15-2 run that helped the Sixers take a 56-42 lead into halftime.

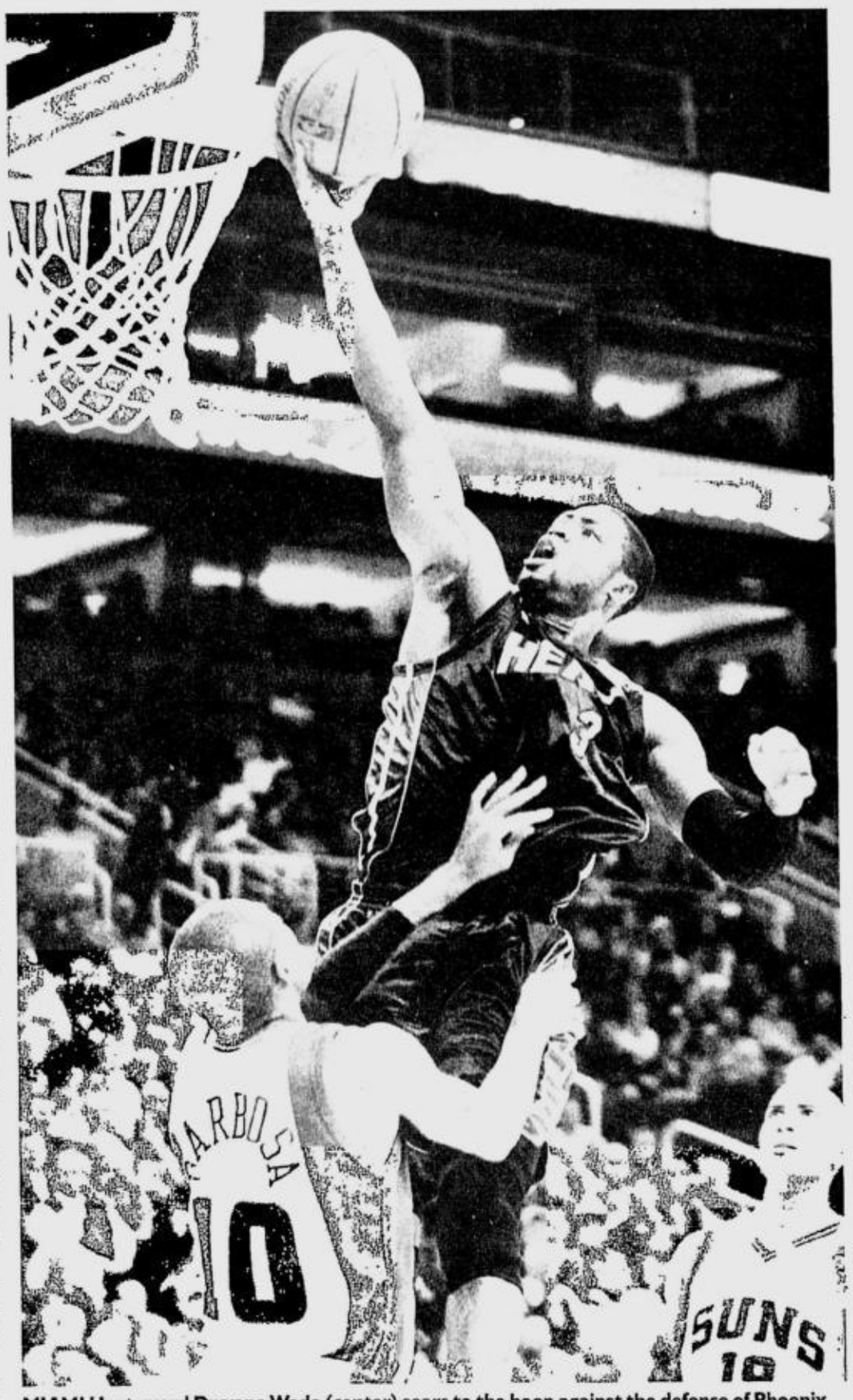
In Phoenix, Dwyane Wade scored 10 of his 31 points in the final four minutes and the Miami Heat ended its longest road trip of the season with a 117-113 victory over the Suns.

The Heat, in their sixth game away from home in nine days, had double-digit leads in all four quarters to beat Phoenix for the first time in three seasons.

Udonis Haslem added 21 points, Shaquille O'Neal had 18 and Dorell Wright 16 as the Heat put six players in double figures and shot 59 percent to win consecutive games for the first time this season.

The Suns made five three-pointers, three by Grant Hill and two by Steve Nash, in the final 1:10 but could get no closer than 111-108.

Hill, Raja Bell, Shawn Marion and Amare Stoudemire all scored 19 points for Phoenix. *AP, Reuters*



MIAMI Heat guard Dwyane Wade (center) soars to the hoop against the defense of Phoenix standouts Leandro Barbosa (left) and Raja Bell in their game yesterday. AP

Against Patriots, it's wise to keep mouth shut

FOXBOROUGH—LONG AFTER A future Hall of Fame quarterback undressed him in front of a national audience, with touchdown bombs over his head and verbal bombs inches from his face, young Pittsburgh safety Anthony Smith stood at his stall in the hush of the muted Steelers locker room yesterday and was offered a chance to rewrite history.

Smith is the second-year player who boldly—and foolishly—guaranteed the Steelers would win yesterday's game against New England, which streaked to a 13-0 start and is eyeing a perfect NFL elimination record.

"Anthony," a journalist asked him, just minutes after New England shredded his team, 34-13, by scorching the secondary for 399 passing yards and four touchdowns, "If you could do it over, would you guarantee the win again?"

"Yes," he answered. "I come out every game to win. In this league, if you walk into an arena planning to lose, you're not a guy anyone will want to play with."

In theory, he is correct. But Smith not only heaped undue pressure on himself with his misplaced arrogance, he also juiced a weary Patriots team that had played three consecutive night games and was, quite frankly, looking a bit vulnerable in the wake of tight wins over Philadelphia and Baltimore.

NEW ENGLAND quarterback Tom Brady and the rest of the Patriots know how to juice themselves up at the slightest sign of direspect. AFP

Yet nobody can match New England's ability to take the slightest perceived disrespect and transform it into a major—and personal—injustice. The Patriots relied on this tactic in Super Bowl XXXIX when loudmouth receiver Freddie Mitchell belittled their secondary. They worked themselves into a lather during last season's playoffs when San Diego star Shawne Merriman predicted the Chargers would face the Jets, because they would beat the Patriots.

The latest victim of their motivational frenzy is Smith, the former Syracuse star whose aggressive defensive style was expertly exploited by the Patriots.

"We knew he plays that way, so we put some stuff to take advantage of that," said receiver Jabar Gaffney.

"Lesson learned," said cornerback Ellis Hobbs. "A hard lesson learned."

"I've said some things I've regretted," Hobbs added, "but nothing where I've gotten the whole East Coast ready for you, saying, 'Come on over here so we can slap you around.'"

There's no doubt the Patriots targeted Smith Sunday. He was covering Randy Moss when Brady found him in the back of the end zone for the first touchdown of the day. As the quarterback ran to congratulate his receiver, he turned and delivered some choice words to the safety.

"I don't care to repeat them, especially if my mother reads it," Brady said. "She wouldn't be very happy with what I said."

Brady exploited Smith again on the very next offensive series. He faked the hand-off to Laurence Maroney and watched with glee as the safety came up to help stop the run, then got burned on Brady's 63-yard bomb to Moss. Asked if he intentionally called a play to embarrass the kid, Brady answered, "No, he just ended up being in the right place at the right time."

And then he burst out laughing.

It's interesting to revisit the comments from New England earlier in the week, when most of the Patriots professed indifference over Smith's comments. Now we know better. He ticked this team off, and it was hell bent on making him pay. *NYT News Service*

SPORTSWATCH

Batawang-Solis finally set

FILIPINO BERT BATAWANG'S CRACK AT IBF junior flyweight champion Ulises Solis' title will headline the "Golpes de Poder" fight card put up by Zanfer Promotions on Dec. 15 at the Auditorio Benito Juarez de Guadalajara in Jalisco, Mexico.

According to Guillermo Brito Rodriguez of Zanfer Promotions, the card will include the nine other fights.

Batawang, along with trainer Jeremiah Quijano and manager Sammy Gello-ani, left for Los Angeles the other day, and is slated to fly to Guadalajara, Mexico today. While in LA, Batawang will work out at Freddie Roach's Wild Card Gym.

"I am going to Mexico to knock him (Solis) out," Batawang said in a press conference.

Salven Lagumbay, Contributor

SJC 'Rambulan' continues

FAST-PACED ENCOUNTERS RESUME today at San Juan Coliseum via the second round of eliminations in the *Pamaskong Rambulan* 6-cock derby, featuring more than 70 fights.

This five-day cockfight spectacle (Dec. 10, 12, 15, 17 and 19) has a guaranteed prize of P3 million and an entry fee of P11,000.

Meanwhile, the 125K Fastest Win Ulutan unfolds on Friday, Dec. 15. The Super Angels 4-cock derby, meanwhile, fires off on Dec. 22

'Salpukan' round 2 up

ROUND TWO OF *PAMASKONG SALPUKAN* 6-cock derby gets going today at the Makati Coliseum with more than 70 encounters lined up.

Three more elimination rounds will be staged on Dec. 17, 19 and 22, according to hosts Lito Orillaza, Rudy Salud and William Co.

The winners will get more than P4 million in total prizes. For details, call 8963545, 8956475 and 4898828.

F1: Ex-champion Alonso back with Renault

MADRID, SPAIN—AFTER AN UNSETtled season marked by infighting and controversy, Fernando Alonso capped 2007 on a positive note.

The two-time Formula One world champion agreed to a two-year contract with Renault that puts him back behind the wheel of the French team where he achieved his greatest success.

"I am delighted to be returning to Renault," Alonso said in a statement on Monday. "This is the team where I grew up as a driver in Formula One."

Alonso is moving on after a turbulent season at McLaren, where the 26-year-old Spaniard was released from his three-year contract last month after publicly falling out with team boss Ron Dennis.

The rocky relations—caused by Dennis' refusal to give Alonso No. 1 status over rookie driving partner Lewis Hamilton—eventually led to a spy scandal that cost McLaren $100 million and all of its constructors' championships points.

Alonso will partner another rookie in Nelson Piquet Jr. at Renault. *AP*

FILIPINO Joegin Ladon connects against Paunandes Paulus of Malaysia during their -60kg semifinal boxing match. Although Ladon lost on points, boxing is seen as one of the brightest Philippine Olympic medal hopes. AFP

For SEAG athletes, it's Beijing or bust

NAKHON RATCHASIMA, THAILAND—Southeast Asian athletes are honing their traditional agility and speed with feet, fists and wrists in hopes of snatching medals in at least four sports at next year's Beijing Olympics.

World class performances at the current Southeast Asian Games, the regional warm-up for the Olympics, are again coming, or expected, in badminton, taekwondo, boxing and weightlifting.

Champions like Thailand's Manus Boonjumnong, a boxing gold medalist at Athens, and Indonesia's Taufik Hidayat, the badminton singles winner at those games, are preparing to defend their crowns in Beijing.

Of the 133 medal-winning countries, Indonesia ranks 52nd in the all-time summer Olympic medals race with five golds. Thailand stands 57th, Philippines at 74, Malaysia at 93, with Singapore and Vietnam both at 121.

The Philippines, which last managed an Olympic medal in 1996, fields a strong taekwondo squad and stands a chance in boxing.

Santiparb Tejavanija, former head of the Sports Authority of Thailand, maintains Southeast Asians could fare better if they used their biennial event to greater advantage and didn't dilute already limited budgets by supporting non-Olympic sports.

There are 26 official Olympic sports. The current Southeast Asian Games is staging 43, including petanque, lawn bowls, ballroom dancing and snooker.

"They are just running around chasing medals at these Games—quantity not quality—rather than really focusing on preparing for the Olympics," he said. "We don't have a long range vision." *AP*

SPORTS

RP karatedo bets snare 3 gold medals

MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIAtion for the Advance of Karatedo (AAK) Team Philippines recently harvested medals, including three golds, in separate competitions in Hong Kong last month.

Norman Montalvo won the gold over a Taiwanese fighter in the kumite -55kg event of the 11th Asia Pacific Shitoryu Karatedo Championships held at the Shek Kip Mei Park Sports Center on Nov. 24-25.

Montalvo likewise took a bronze in men's kata after losing in the semifinals to world champion Takashi Katada of Japan.

In the 4th Asia Pacific Goju-kai Karatedo Championships at the Harbour Road Sports Center last Nov. 14-19, Raissa Mikaela Velasquez topped the 15-17 kata event while Ronaldene Alethea Flores ruled the 8-and-under kata.

Other top finishers in the Shitoryu Championships were bronze medalists Gerardo Rodrigo Anonas (-60kg kumite) and Oliver Neil Mañalac (men's open weight).

Flores settled for the silver medal in the 7-8 years kumite event, along with Rebecca Cyril Torres (12-14 kumite) and Gerardo Rodrigo Anonas (-60kg men's kumite).

The other bronze medalists were Jordon Craig Guevera (8-and-under kata), Drahcir Borja (12-14 kata), Regina Gabrielle Torres (9-11 kata), Rebecca Torres (12-14 kata), Ven Laurence Silangil (7-8 kumite event), Joseph Louie Jacinto Miranda (15-17 kumite), Carlo Martin Murillo (15-17 kumite), Montalvo (-55kg men's kumite), Mañalac (-70 kg men's kumite) and Ana Ecaterina Tan (-53kg women's kumite).

The AAK is the lone local association recognized and affiliated with the World Shitoryu Karatedo Federation and the International Karatedo Gojukai Association.

A TRIUMPHANT stint for the Philippine team to the 4th Asian Pacific Goju-Kai karate-do championships

La Salle-Zobel cops WBL title

DE LA SALLE ZOBEL REpulsed Miriam College to eke out a 58-55 victory and bag the high school (competitive) title in the Milo-sponsored 2007 BEST Center Women's Basketball League Sunday at the Xavier School gym.

La Salle led by double digits after three quarters, but Miriam rallied to tie the count at 54. DLSZ, however, regained its bearing and scored pivotal points to surge ahead for good, 58-54.

Princess Trinidad, who was later adjudged most valuable player, led DLSZ with 13 points, while Therese Estrada posted 21 for the losers.

Assumption Antipolo also thwarted St. Theresa's College to pull through, 61-52, and bag the high school (developmental) crown.

MVP Macrie Claire Aseron and Kea Cruz sparkled for Assumption Antipolo.

Miriam made up for its setback to DLSZ by winning the elementary plum over the La Sallians, 39-22, while College of St. Benilde proved too much for St. Scholastica's College, 65-44, in the college finals.

CSB's Jessa Mae Sarael was named the college level's MVP.

The sportsmanship awards went to CSB college; DLSZ, high school (competitive), Miriam, high school (developmental) and DLSZ, elementary.

So banners chess team to Asia tilt

By Roy Luarca

SO YOUNG YET SO GOOD, Wesley So will again be tested when he spearheads a Philippine squad bound for the Asian Chess Team Championships in Visakhapatnam, South India, early next year.

WESLEY So RYAN LIM

Now the world's youngest Grandmaster at 14, So may yet be given the top board assignment over fellow GMs Rogelio "Joey" Antonio, Eugene Torre and Mark Paragua and International master Julio Catalino Sadorra when the Filipinos compete against the world-ranked Indians and Chinese and entries from the former Soviet Republics in the tournament set Jan. 2-11.

So, who became a full-fledged GM during the recent third Prospero Pichay Jr. Cup, is expected to overtake Antonio as the country's top player when the Fide (World Chess Federation) releases its players' rating in January.

National Chess Federation of the Philippines president Pichay is pleased with So's rapid rise and wants to give him maximum exposure.

Pichay said he will also nominate So to be the Philippine Sportswriters Association's "Athlete of the Year" for 2007.

"So's accomplishment in the international chess scene is unprecedented," said Pichay. "Right now, he is the world's youngest GM at age 14 years, one month and 28 days and the world's seventh youngest to achieve the feat."

So, the world's strongest player in his age-group, Antonio, Torre and Paragua were all members of the RP men's team that landed 44th in the 2006 Turin Chess Olympiad. Paragua manned the top board then with Torre and Antonio playing board 2 and 3 and So serving as an alternate.

Composing the women's team are Sheerie Joy Lomibao, Beverly Mendoza, Sherily Cua and Catherine Perena, the same players that gave the country 26th place in the Turin Olympiad.

RACING

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Trl)—Big Spender (2), Siempre Naman (1), Go Dodgers Go (3)
Race 2—(Penta/Qrt/Trl)—Grand Homer (11), Potchi (9), Sir Frederick (4), Prize Guy (1), Enjoyable (2)
Race 3—(Trl)—Hazit Coming (4), Brazilian Babe (5), Paminsanminsan (1)
Race 4—(Qrt/Trl)—Blitzkrieg (2), Head Turner (1), Speed King (4), Jewelmer (3)
Race 5—(Penta/Qrt/Trl)—One's Man Soul (3), Pele (6), Hard To Find (7), Karma (1), Saintly Path (2)
Race 6—(Qrt/Trl)—Kapit Bahay/Awesome Buddy (7), Top Quest (5), Fly Aday Fly (6), Capricorn Aida (4)
Race 7—(Penta/Qrt/Trl)—Rogue Knight (1), Jacobo's Pride (4), Speedy Kim (3), Fully Leaded (8), Grey Magic (6)
Race 8—(Super 6/Qrt/Trl)—Reptoid (7), Crew Cut (8), Andorra (4), Naglalabyog (5), Silent Operator (10), Go Go Elgene (11)

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Exports jumped 10.5% in October

10-month total at $41.85B

By Michelle V. Remo

THE COUNTRY'S EXPORTS GREW AT A FASTER PACE of 10.5 percent to $4.65 billion in October from a year ago as companies around the globe started building up their inventories in anticipation of higher demand during the holidays.

In September, exports grew by only 4.6 percent year-on-year.

The accelerated rise in exports in October was accounted for largely by the electronics sector, which posted a growth of 9.4 percent to $2.87 billion. Electronics are the country's major export products, accounting for 61.8 percent of the total earnings for the month.

"The last quarter of the year normally records the highest growth for the electronics sector because of the coming holidays," according to Ernesto Santiago, president of the Semiconductors and Electronics Industries of the Philippines Inc.

The latest figure brought total exports for the first 10 months of the year to $41.85 billion, up by 5.44 percent from the same period last year.

However, the 10-month cumula-

EXPORTS/ B6

Peso now at 41.40 to a dollar

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO YESTERDAY EXTENDED its gains to a new seven-and-a-half year high of 41.40 alongside a regional currency market perked up by the rise of the Chinese yuan as well as ex-

PESO/ B6

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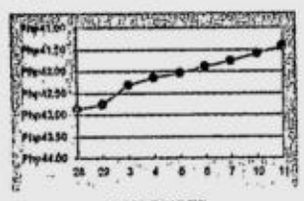

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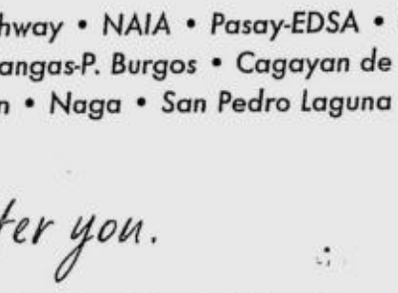

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Citi forecasts 6.8-7.6% growth for RP in next 2 years

Sees investment recovery and buoyant domestic demand

By Doris C. Dumlao

GLOBAL BANKING GIANT CITIgroup Inc. sees the Philippine economy growing by 6.8 percent next year and 7.6 percent in 2009 on the back of an investment recovery and buoyant domestic demand.

"We expect an upbeat private investment cycle over the next two years to be supported by sustained public investment and favorable financial market setting," Citi said in its Asia-Pacific outlook for 2008.

The US-based financial conglomerate also said that while the US property downturn and rising oil prices were causing financial stress in the region, the global economy had other sources of resilience. Global structural adjustments following the US mortgage fallout were also seen happening by next year, thus paving the way for an export recovery in the Philippines by 2009.

"The US economy enjoys strong productivity growth, the absence of significant industry imbalances outside the housing sector, and strong balance sheets for both corporate and households. Strong financial positions should limit vulnerability of (employment) and business spending to tightening credit conditions," Citi said.

Another source of strength seen for the global economy is the process of sustained high growth that has been established in core emerging economies like China and India.

In the Philippines, Citi said domestic demand should likewise remain buoyant over the 2008-09 forecast horizon with an average gross domestic product (GDP) growth of at least 7 percent—especially with rising infrastructure spending and further policy interest rate easing by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

For this year, Citi expects the country's GDP growth at 7.1 percent following the robust performance in the first nine months, notwithstanding weaker export output in the third quarter.

The report said the combination of an export recovery and investment peaking in the second half of 2009 would probably generate GDP growth of close to 8 percent in the third and fourth quarter of 2009.

GDP, deemed as the single most important economic indicator, refers to the total amount of goods and services produced by the domestic economy in a given period.

Citi said real investments in the country would likely grow by 10.7 percent next year and further by 14.5 percent in 2009.

As a share of GDP, real investments were seen to peak slightly below 19 percent in 2009 from the prevailing 17 percent. (During the Philippine Development Forum early this year, multilateral and bilateral creditors called for an increase in the investment ratio to 20 percent to make a dent on the fight against poverty.)

Citi said construction, on the back of strong public investment, should lead the way among the investment industries as the sector would likely post growth of 15-20 percent over the next two years.

"This and a stronger pace of domestic consumption should put pressure on the capacity utilization of domestic-oriented manufacturing industries that may help jumpstart a capex (capital expenditure) cycle," Citi said.

The bank said business capital spending on durable equipment could rise by 10 percent in 2009

CITI FORECASTS/ B6

4-yr bond rate falls to 5.875%

By Michelle V. Remo

BANKS' STRONG APPETITE FOR risk-free securities pulled down the rate of the 4-year treasury bonds by more than a percentage point to 5.875 percent yesterday, the last government securities auction for the year.

The rate for the 4-year bonds last stood at 6.965 percent in the July 10 auction.

The Bureau of the Treasury said the drop in the 4-year bond rate was due to high demand for the debt paper, as shown by the P18.84 billion worth of bids that exceeded the government's debt offering of only P7 billion.

The government accepted P7 billion worth of bids as it did not see any need to borrow more than the scheduled amount.

Last October, the government generated P58.5 billion in additional revenues from the sale of its remaining 60-percent stake in PNOC-Energy Development Corp. This was on top of the estimated P43 billion raised earlier this year from the sale of other state-owned assets.

Finance Undersecretary Roberto Tan said privatization resulted in a strong cash position for the government.

The sizable appetite for the bonds was attributed partly to the anticipated move of the US Federal Reserve to cut its key policy rate in its meeting yesterday. The market expects the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to also implement a rate cut to prevent a widening of the interest rate differential.

The BSP's overnight borrowing rate currently stands at 5.5 percent while the US Fed rate is at 4.5 percent. Both central banks are seen to cut their rates by a quarter percentage point.

Some analysts said the BSP would not allow a widening of the interest rate differential to prevent the peso from appreciating further. If local interest rates are significantly higher than that of the US Fed rate, this would encourage more dollar investments into the Philippines, thus resulting in higher demand for and subsequent appreciation of the peso.

A cut in the BSP's key policy rates influence interest rates on government securities to drop as well. Banks are therefore encouraged to buy more treasury bonds prior to a rate cut by the BSP.

"Banks are already positioning given the expected decision of the Fed to cut its rate and the BSP's reaction to it," Finance Undersecretary Roberto Tan said in a briefing after the auction.

It was earlier reported that the government's borrowings as of the first 10 months of the year stood at P410.47 billion, already exceeding the full-year program of P380.95 billion. Officials earlier said the excess borrowings were partly due to the government's issuance of retail treasury bonds (RTBs) in July.

The government had originally intended to sell only P8 billion in RTBs, but the market showed huge demand for the securities. Finance officials said this encouraged the government to sell more than P50 billion in RTBs.

Tan said the government may reduce the borrowing program set for 2008 because of the excess borrowings this year.

PNOC unit expects ₱410.7-M profit

By Abigail L. Ho

PNOC DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEment Corp. (PDMC), the real estate arm of the state-owned Philippine National Oil Co., expects its 2007 profit to hit P410.7 million, a big jump from last year's P14.3 million.

PDMC president and chief executive Wilfredo Bacareza said the expected profit surge could be attributed to the company's aggressive collection efforts, drastic cost-cutting and the disposition of assets.

"(The year) 2007 is definitely the best year since the company started operations as it is set to achieve record high growths in all aspects of its operations, most importantly record-breaking profits and soaring cash reserves," he said in a statement yesterday.

"This year, the company projects to break records in terms of highest profit at P410.7 million, highest profit growth of 2,761.9 percent, highest operating income at P115 million, which is 567 percent higher than 2006 level," he added.

With the company's strong performance this year, he said PDMC's cash reserves for 2007 should hit P402.6 million—the highest ever in the company's history.

He said that for the past years, PDMC had suffered losses. In 2000, the company posted a net loss of P10.26 million, followed by P3.75 million in 2002 and P21.42 million in 2003.

The stream of losses only stopped last year when PDMC registered a net income of P14.3 million, growing 76.67 percent from 2005, he said.

PDMC's parent firm PNOC actually plans to eventually dissolve the subsidiary, thus the steady disposition of its assets.

Instead of privatization via straight asset sale, PDMC will most likely just be dissolved when all its assets have been sold.

PDMC is engaged in industrial estate development and management, managing the 123-hectare Filoil property in Rosario, Cavite.

The PNOC subsidiary was into socialized housing, subdivisions and commercial areas, including a joint

PNOC UNIT/ B6

BPI sees 12% growth in remittance

Says higher incomes compensating for slowdown in deployment

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE AYALAS' BANK OF THE PHILIPpine Islands, the country's biggest banking channel for overseas Filipino remittances, sees its money transfer business growing by 10 to 12 percent next year despite the downtrend in the deployment of new workers.

Teresita Tan, BPI senior vice president for overseas banking, yesterday told reporters that for this year, the bank's remittance volume would likely grow by 15 percent in line with industry performance.

She added that average remittances per transaction were increasing as overseas Filipino workers had to compensate for the shrinking conversion rate of the US dollar given fixed household expenditures in peso terms. From an average remittance of $300 to $500 per transaction (usually on a monthly basis), the range has gone up to $350 to $550, she said.

"Remittances of Filipinos are increasing by $50 to $100 per transaction because they have to send (to meet the equivalent) absolute value in pesos. While the peso is appreciating, tuition fee expenses and others remain the same."

Tan estimated that BPI—cited by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas as an outstanding banking channel for remittances for the last two consecutive years—enjoyed a 23-percent market share in this lucrative business. The bank also dominates 60 percent of the remittance business from the manning industry.

Remittances flowing to the Philippines through banks amount to at least $1 billion a month.

Tan said higher incomes were compensating for the slowdown in the deployment of new workers abroad.

"The OFWs are highly skilled and their wages are higher," Tan said. "We were concerned when deployment was going down but we're sending more skilled people like computer professionals, doctors and nurses. And a lot of them are investing."

"There's a slowdown in deployment but there is growth in the absolute value of remittances because of the quality of deployment," she said.

To further expand its worldwide reach, four new BPI Express Remittance Centers were established, bringing to 20 the total remittance offices across the globe. In Italy, an office in Milan was opened to cater primarily to the Chinese market while a Chinese desk was set up in Bologna, continuing the bank's thrust to generate business from the non-Filipino market as well.

New tie-ups were likewise forged, including arrangements with top regional banks like Woori Bank of South Korea and RHB Bank Berhad of Malaysia.

BPI also reported that significant volume was brought in by Wells Fargo's new remittance service called Express Send, which was coursed pri-

BPI SEES/ B6

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Adventure GLS Sport - Diesel	840,000	70,000	64,115	43,882	34,989	24,934	19,954	17,177	15,469
Adventure Super Sport - Diesel	883,000	120,000	67,520	46,213	36,845	26,257	21,012	18,088	16,289
Adventure GLS Sport Gas A/T	893,000	120,000	68,414	46,825	37,331	26,603	21,289	18,327	16,504

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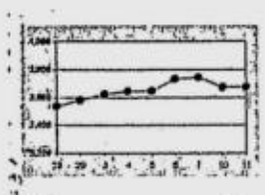
Shares close flat ahead of US Fed's rate-setting



SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.1-PERCENT lower yesterday as cautious investors refrained from taking positions ahead of the US Federal Reserve's decision on interest rates, dealers said.

The main index lost as much as 26 points in early trading before bargain-hunters stepped in, chasing market leader Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) and Ayala Corp.

The composite index finished down 3.14 points at 3,672.38. It moved between 3,649.38 and 3,683.97.

The broader all-share index was up 0.9 of a point at 2,243.75.

There were 57 advancers and 54 decliners with 59 ending flat.

A total of 1.6 billion shares worth P3.6 billion were traded.

Wall Street was upbeat on Monday as expectations for a rate cut and an uptick in pending home sales helped offset concerns about another round of subprime mortgage-related losses.

The Fed was to meet later yesterday to decide what to do with interest rates, with financial markets having priced in a 25 basis point rate cut.

Markets were previously betting for an aggressive half-point cut in interest rates until recent positive US economic data came out.

"A rate cut is a given ... but we may see a muted reaction if it's just 25 basis points," said Lawrence de Leon at Accord Capital Equities.

Foreign funds were also seen cutting their positions in local stocks ahead of the widely expected rate cut in the United States, said Ron Rodrigo at DBP Daiwa Securities.

"Foreign investors are cashing out of emerging markets and transferring funds to the US," he said.

News that Philippine exports rose 10.5 percent in October from a year earlier, the first double-digit growth rate in nine months, failed to inspire investors, dealers said. *(See story on Page B1.)*

PLDT, the nation's biggest company by market value, rose P15 to P3,050. Ayala Corp., the country's biggest conglomerate, was up P10 at P585. *AFP*

CURRENCIES

December 11, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.679486	1.000000	41.6580
Japan	Yen	0.006085	0.008956	0.3731
United Kingdom	Pound	1.390229	2.046000	85.2323
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.087152	0.128261	5.3431
Switzerland	Franc	0.602649	0.886918	36.9472
Canada	Dollar	0.675165	0.993641	41.3931
Singapore	Dollar	0.472226	0.694975	28.9513
Australia	Dollar	0.600306	0.883470	36.8036
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.811964	2.666667	111.0880
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.181632	0.267308	11.1355
Brunei	Dollar	0.470591	0.692569	28.8510
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000073	0.000108	0.0045
Thailand	Baht	0.022725	0.033445	1.3933
UAE	Dirham	0.185025	0.272301	11.3435
EU	Euro	1.000000	1.471700	61.3081
Korea	Won	0.000736	0.001083	0.0451
China	Yuan**	0.091882	0.135223	5.6331
Denmark	Kroner	0.134010	0.197223	8.2159
India	Rupee	0.017290	0.025445	1.0600
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.204849	0.301477	12.5589
New Zealand	Dollar	0.530351	0.780518	32.5148
Sweden	Kroner	0.106071	0.156104	6.5030
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.021024	0.030941	1.2889

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY time—Dec. 10, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian time closing rate as of Dec. 10, 2007

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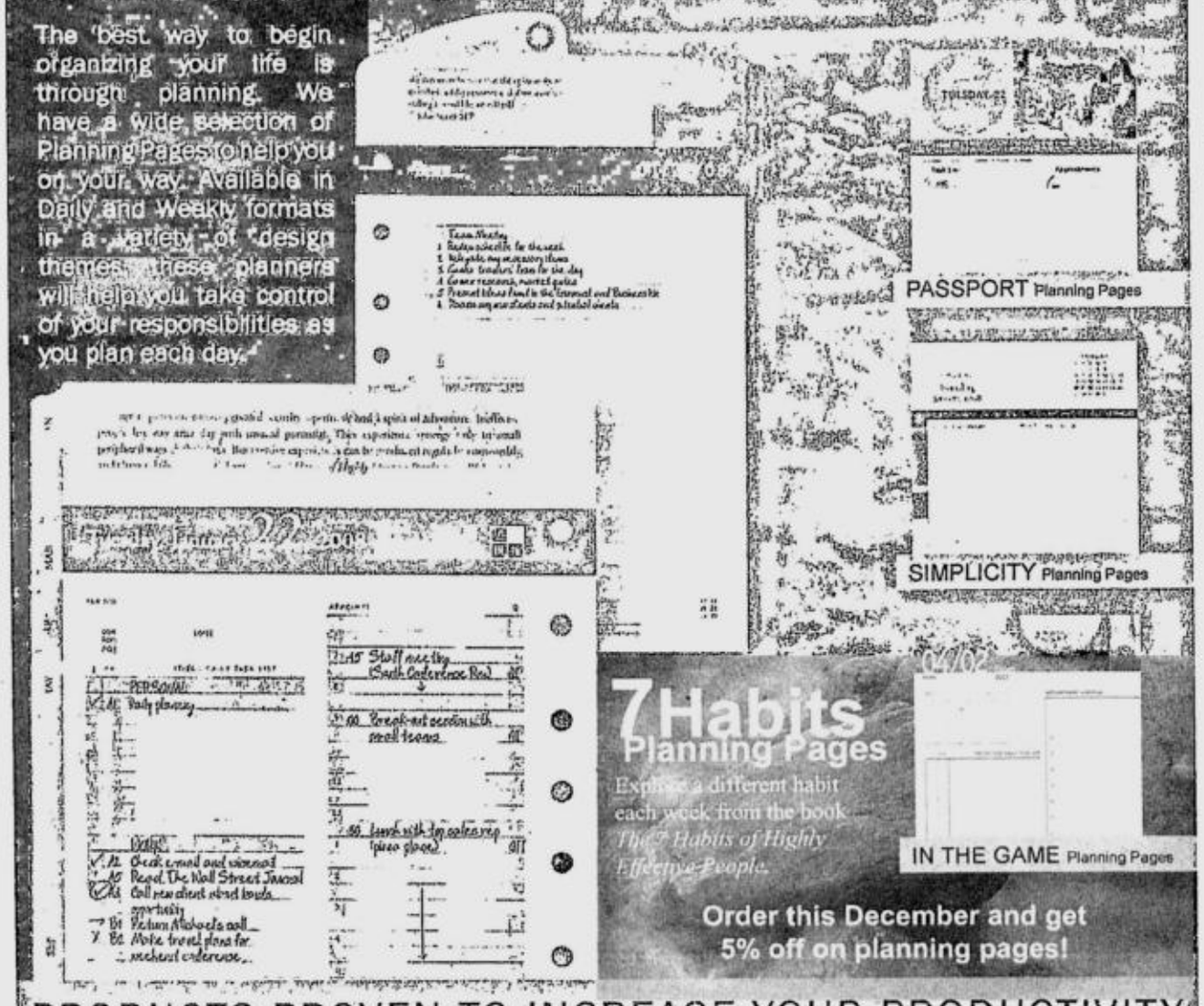

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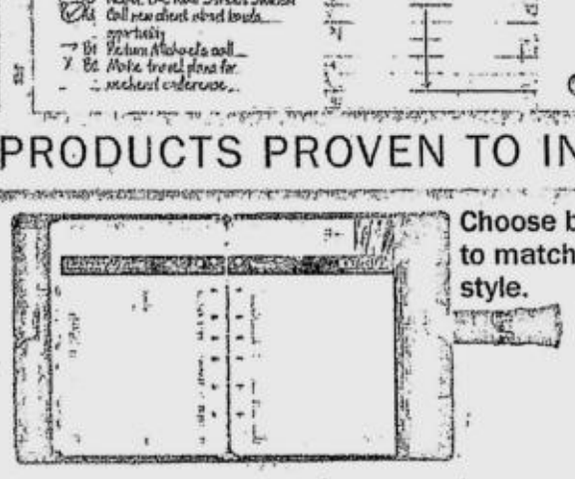

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of December 11, 2007)

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		BANKS					
17.5	6.8	Asiatrust Development Bank Inc.	8.6	8.6	8.6	8.6	6,000
73	43	Banco de Oro-EPCI Inc.	60	62	60	61	1,281,700
73.5	53	Bank of the Philippine Islands	65	65	62	64	3,479,900
748	544	China Banking Corp.	660	660	660	660	740
23.5	14	Citystate Savings Bank	23	23	23	23	100,300
0.63	0.36	Export and Industry Bank Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	20,000
75.5	47.5	Metropolitan Bank and Trust Company	60.5	61	60	60.5	347,600
65.5	39	Philippine National Bank	51.5	51.5	50.5	51	109,000
68	47	Philippine Savings Bank	60	60	60	60	2,000
39.57	20.43	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	25.5	25.5	24.5	25.5	745,700
90	63	Security Bank Corp.	75	75.5	74.5	75.5	221,300
66	42	Union Bank of the Philippines	44	45.5	44	45	1,348,500
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
2.22	0.6	Bankard Inc.	1.9	1.95	1.9	1.94	726,000
16.25	4.6	CitiSecOnline.com Inc.	12	12.25	11.5	11.75	185,800
5.9	4.8	I-Remit Inc.	4.95	4.95	4.85	4.9	59,000
1,970.00	1,580.00	Manulife Financial Corp.	1,640.00	1,640.00	1,640.00	1,640.00	50
5	2.7	National Reinsurance Corp. of the Phils.	3.3	3.45	3.3	3.45	6,008,000
3.1	1.32	PCI Leasing and Finance Inc.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	22,000
1,390.00	260	The Philippine Stock Exchange Inc.	1,075.00	1,080.00	1,070.00	1,080.00	17,930
2,500.00	1,970.00	Sun Life Financial Inc.	2,220.00	2,255.00	2,220.00	2,255.00	1,430
1.94	1.3	Vantage Corp	1.52	1.54	1.52	1.54	750,000
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
6.2	3.8	Aboitiz Power Corp.	5.4	5.4	5.3	5.3	3,438,000
0.57	0.22	East Asia Power Resources Corp.	0.45	0.47	0.45	0.46	800,000
70.5	49	First Gen Corp.	61	61.5	60.5	61.5	353,100
92	57	First Phil. Holdings Corp.	74	75	72.5	75	1,629,000
18.5	8.8	Manila Water Company Inc.	18	18	17.75	17.75	2,229,300
105.45	44.09	Manila Electric Company	86.5	86.5	85.5	86	881,200
7.8	4.1	PNOC Energy Development Corp.	6.9	6.9	6.8	6.8	13,597,000
7.4	3.95	Petron Corp.	6.1	6.2	6	6.1	7,628,000
14.75	6.4	Phoenix Petroleum Philippines Inc.	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8	111,000
2.5	1.7	SPC Power Corp.	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	600,000
2.04	0.91	Trans-Asia Oil and Energy Dev't Corp	1.34	1.36	1.34	1.34	1,386,000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
6.3	3.4	Alaska Milk Corp.	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85	236,000
2.32	1.48	Alliance Tuna International Inc.	1.62	1.64	1.58	1.6	81,000
6.6	2.08	Central Azucarera De Tarlac	2.08	2.08	2.08	2.08	2,000
2.2	1.08	CADP Group Corp.	1.52	1.54	1.52	1.54	62,000
61	40.5	Jollibee Foods Corp.	51.5	51.5	50.5	50.5	464,800
9.1	5.7	Pancake House Inc.	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8	10,000
0.98	0.5	RFM Corp.	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.71	60,000
3.1	2.06	Roxas Holdings	2.85	2.85	2.8	2.8	1,329,000
60	42.5	San Miguel Corp. A	50	51.5	50	50.5	245,200
88	43	San Miguel Corp. B	50.5	51.5	50.5	51.5	534,200
0.66	0.33	Swift Foods Inc.	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	10,000
6.5	3	Tanduay Holdings Inc.	5.1	5.5	5.1	5.5	6,000
20.75	13.5	Universal Robina Corp	14.75	15	13.75	14.25	5,600,400
0.55	0.24	Vitarich Corp	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	60,000
		CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
29	7.3	Concrete Aggregates Corp. A	29	29	29	29	4,000
6.1	2.65	EEI Corp.	4.55	4.55	4.45	4.45	143,000
21.5	6	Federal Res. Inv. Group	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,000
9.2	4.95	Holcim Philippines Inc.	7.8	8	7.8	8	1,805,000
7	3.65	Republic Cement Corp.	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	488,000
2	0.81	Southeast Asia Cement Holdings Inc.	1.04	1.04	1	1.04	2,588,000
23	2.12	TKC Steel Corp	8.9	9.2	8.7	9.2	936,000
		CHEMICALS					
6.3	3.75	Chemrez Technologies Inc.	4.25	4.25	4.2	4.2	496,000
1.46	0.51	Matuhay Vinyl Corp	1	1.18	0.88	0.88	1,660,000
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
7.4	5.1	Panasonic Manufacturing Phils. Corp.	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7	120,000
0.75	0.175	Picop Resources Inc.	0.37	0.38	0.37	0.37	1,420,000
9	6.2	Splash Corp	7.1	8	7.1	7.9	13,977,000
		HOLDING FIRMS					
39	18.75	ABS-CBN Hldg Corp - Phil. Depost Receipts	33.5	34.5	33.5	34.5	57,000
3.9	2.7	A. Soriano Corp.	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	100,000
0.185	0.0575	AJO.net Holdings Inc.	0.135	0.135	0.125	0.125	13,540,000
1.28	0.29	APC Group Inc.	0.65	0.66	0.64	0.65	1,200,000
3.65	1.5	ATN Holdings Inc. A	2.4	2.5	2.4	2.48	204,000
0.018	0.0075	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs.Inc. A	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	33,000,000
0.019	0.0075	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. B	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	1,500,000
9.7	5.8	Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc.	7	7.1	7	7.1	7,930,000
0.021	0.0095	Alcorn Gold Resources Corp.	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	15,000,000
7.3	3.5	Alliance Global Group Inc.	5.3	5.3	5.2	5.3	600,000
1.38	0.59	Alsons Consolidated Resources Inc.	0.81	0.88	0.81	0.86	2,910,000
2.9	0.92	Anglo-Philippine Holdings Corp.	2.44	2.44	2.4	2.4	910,000
8	0.8	Aries Prime Resources Inc.	3.85	3.85	3.8	3.85	52,000
645	400	Ayala Corp.	580	585	570	585	93,010
5.8	2.1	Benpres Holdings Corp.	4.35	4.35	4.35	4.35	911,000
12	5.6	DMCI Holdings Inc.	9.7	9.7	9.6	9.7	18,127,000
2.5	0.85	F and J Princ.e Holdings Corp. A	1.46	1.46	1.46	1.46	25,000
21.5	6	Federal Res. Investment Group Inc.	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,000
8	3.5	Filinvest Development Corp.	6.2	6.4	6.2	6.4	574,000
3.55	1.76	House of Investments Inc.	2	2	2	2	165,000
14.5	8.9	JG Summit Holdings Inc.	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	65,100
5.9	0.61	Jolliville Holdings Corp.	1.62	1.62	1.62	1.62	7,000
28	1.42	Lodestar Investment Hldgs Corp.	19.5	19.5	18	18.25	76,600
11.5	1.5	Minerales Industrias Corp.	7.2	7.4	7	7.2	4,336,000
8.5	3	PAL Holdings Inc.	6.9	6.9	6.8	6.9	40,000
0.28	0.016	Pacifica Inc. A	0.23	0.235	0.225	0.235	64,350,000
0.75	0.19	Prime Orion Philippines Inc.	0.54	0.58	0.54	0.56	11,640,000
452.5	280.52	SM Investments Corp.	355	357.5	347.5	347.5	573,180
0.73	0.145	Sinophil Corp.	0.36	0.37	0.36	0.37	590,000
0.75	0.12	Welfex Industries Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.32	2,100,000
1.1	0.26	Zeus Holdings Inc	0.6	0.6	0.58	0.58	100,000
		PROPERTY					
2.34	1	A Brown Company Inc.	1.52	1.52	1.5	1.5	90,000
8.9	5	Anchor Land Holdings Inc.	7.3	7.4	7.1	7.3	36,000
1.06	0.4	Araneta Properties Inc.	0.63	0.63	0.62	0.62	250,000
19.25	11.88	Ayala Land Inc.	16	16.25	16	16	18,615,100
1.88	1	Belle Corp.	1.22	1.24	1.2	1.24	1,168,000
3.83	1.9	City and Land Developers Inc.	2.1	2.2	2.1	2.2	94,000
2.7	1.25	Cityland Development Corp.	1.62	1.62	1.62	1.62	10,000
0.66	0.39	Crown Equities Inc.	0.59	0.59	0.59	0.59	10,000
0.83	0.24	Cyber Bay Corp.	0.39	0.44	0.38	0.41	48,160,000
0.99	0.53	Empire East Land Holdings Inc.	0.86	0.87	0.86	0.87	18,800,000
6.9	1.1	Eton Properties Philippines Inc.	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.3	52,000
0.47	0.0575	Ever Gotesco Res. and Hold'gs Inc.	0.245	0.245	0.24	0.24	1,590,000
1.48	0.61	Fil-Estate Land Inc.	1	1.02	1	1.02	4,432,000
2.44	1.32	Filinvest Land Inc.	1.56	1.58	1.48	1.5	106,879,000
0.49	0.11	Gotesco Land Inc. A	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	300,000
1.12	0.31	MRC Allied Industries Inc.	0.63	0.63	0.63	0.63	490,000
4.6	2.15	Megaworld Corp.	4.25	4.25	4.1	4.15	26,606,000
6.4	1.5	Metro Pacific Investments Corp.	4.3	4.3	4.25	4.3	186,000
5.2	2.2	Metro Pacific Investments Corp. - Warrants	2.8	2.9	2.5	2.5	340,000
0.7	0.135	Phil. Estates Corp.	0.34	0.35	0.34	0.35	1,730,000
0.86	0.32	Philippine Realty and Holdings Corp.	0.48	0.48	0.44	0.48	790,000
9.2	1.7	Polar Property Holdings Corp.	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.35	41,000
23	14.5	Robinson Land Corp.	17.75	17.75	17.5	17.5	8,570,400
5.9	1.95	SM Development Corp.	3.9	3.95	3.9	3.95	240,000
13.5	7.84	SM Prime Holdings Inc.	11.25	11.25	11	11	5,704,100
3.25	1.5	Shang Properties Inc.	2.16	2.2	2.16	2.2	1,535,000
4.5	0.38	Sta. Lucia Land Inc.	2.2	2.2	2.1	2.16	1,697,000
1.34	0.46	Suntrust Home Developers Inc.	0.65	0.69	0.65	0.66	2,340,000
0.49	0.0975	Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.26	0.27	0.26	0.27	640,000
7.5	3.65	Vista Land and Lifescapes Inc	6	6	5.7	5.9	44,745,000
		MEDIA					
38.5	18.75	ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	34	34.5	33.5	34.5	68,000
12	7.6	GMA Holdings Inc.	8.5	8.5	8.4	8.4	53,000
11.75	7.5	GMA Network Inc.	8.1	8.1	8.1	8.1	40,000
1.03	0.81	Manila Bulletin Publishing Corp	0.88	0.88	0.88	0.88	170,000
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
2.12	1.1	Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc.	1.38	1.4	1.38	1.4	1,650,000
1,750.00	1,180.00	Globe Telecom Inc.	1,585.00	1,585.00	1,575.00	1,580.00	20,990
3,285.00	2,250.00	Phil. Long Distance Telephone Co.	3,035.00	3,055.00	3,020.00	3,050.00	116,530
8.1	5.5	Pilipino Telephone Corp	7	7.1	6.9	7.1	1,731,000
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
0.39	0.17	Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	630,000
11.5	3.55	IPVG Corp.	8.4	8.4	8.3	8.4	269,000
0.065	0.027	ISM Communications Corp.	0.038	0.042	0.038	0.04	271,600,000
2.9	1.1	Ionics Inc.	1.66	1.66	1.66	1.66	50,000
0.32	0.05	Island Information and Technology Inc.	0.18	0.19	0.18	0.185	19,150,000
2.24	1.1	Music Semiconductors Corp.	2.04	2.18	1.96	2.1	6,771,000
0.0725	0.03	Philweb Corp.	0.048	0.048	0.047	0.048	49,700,000
5.8	1.64	Transpacific Broadband Group Int'l Inc	2.65	2.65	2.6	2.6	389,000
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
2.14	1.2	Aboitiz Transport System Corp.	1.26	1.26	1.26	1.26	578,000
6.8	3.6	Asian Terminals Inc.	3.8	3.85	3.8	3.85	2,851,000
49	18.75	Int'l Container Terminal Services Inc.	45.5	45.5	45	45	108,000
2.7	1.12	Lorenzo Shipping Corp	1.68	1.7	1.66	1.66	89,000
		HOTEL & LEISURE					
4.25	1.8	Leisure and Resorts World Corp.	2.46	2.46	2.4	2.42	1,802,000
1.52	0.32	Premiere Entertainment Productions Inc	1.35	1.44	1.34	1.42	7,089,000
1.2	0.55	Waterfront Philippines Inc	0.88	0.88	0.88	0.88	500,000
		EDUCATION					
950	650	Far Eastern University Inc.	810	810	810	810	6,030
3.7	2.6	iPeopie Inc	3.15	3.2	3.15	3.2	2,366,000
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
43	6.6	JTH Davies Holdings Inc.	30	30	28	29	12,200
6	2.04	Macroasia Corp.	4.7	4.8	4.7	4.8	230,000
30	6.2	Paxys Inc.	6.5	6.5	6.3	6.4	255,000
472.5	380	eTelecare Global Solutions Inc.	400	415	390	405	1,110
		MINING					
0.017	0.0085	Abra Mining and Industrial Corp.	0.01	0.011	0.01	0.01	262,000,000
7.2	3.6	Apex Mining Company Inc. A	6.4	6.4	6.2	6.3	311,000
21.25	8.1	Atlas Cons. Mining and Dev't Corp.	13.75	13.75	13.5	13.75	370,200
20.5	8.9	Benguet Corp. A	19.75	20.25	18.25	18.75	514,800
35	24	Benguet Corp. B	27	27	27	27	100
12.75	1.96	Dizon Copper Silver Mines Inc.	10.75	10.75	10	10.25	801,800
3.1	0.6	GEOGRACE Resources Philippines Inc.	2.16	2.18	2.1	2.14	21,519,000
0.56	0.18	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. A	0.53	0.54	0.52	0.53	64,050,000
0.61	0.22	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. B	0.58	0.59	0.57	0.58	19,180,000
0.038	0.017	Manila Mining Corp. A	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.029	25,000,000
0.041	0.02	Manila Mining Corp. B	0.032	0.032	0.032	0.032	20,000,000
30	3.6	NiHAO Minerals Resources Int'l Inc.	22	22.5	21.5	22	508,600
0.021	0.0088	Omico Corp.	0.013	0.014	0.013	0.014	20,400,000
0.015	0.007	Omico Corp. - Warrants	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	1,000,000
11.25	3.5	Philex Mining Corp.	9.8	9.8	9.7	9.7	16,623,000
49.5	14.75	Semirara Mining Corp.	43	43	43	43	55,000
1.36	0.58	United Paragon Mining Corp.	0.7	0.72	0.7	0.72	400,000
1.8	0.99	Vulcan Industrial and Mining Corp	1.16	1.16	1.14	1.14	1,240,000
		OIL					
0.58	0.26	Basic Energy Corp	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	80,000
0.029	0.01	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. A	0.024	0.025	0.024	0.025	36,900,000
13.75	9	Petroenergy Resources Corp.	9.9	10	9.9	10	46,000
0.032	0.0097	The Philodrill Corp.	0.029	0.03	0.029	0.029	175,900,000

	AVERAGES		VOLUME	VALUE
Financial	893.96 UP	0.71	15,432,950	471,581,335.00
Industrial	4,392.22 DOWN	4.82	64,992,200	706,629,335.00
Holding Firms	2,082.55 UP	18.68	180,718,900	560,120,345.00
Property	1,613.49 DOWN	19.05	295,810,600	1,099,263,030.00
Service	1,844.56 UP	5.68	367,642,860	485,156,930.00
Mining & Oil	8,616.26 DOWN	9.82	665,899,500	303,859,480.00
All Shares Index	2,243.75 UP	0.90		
PSEI	3,672.38 DOWN	3.14		
	GRAND TOTALS		1,590,497,010	3,626,610,455.00

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Pepsi-Cola to pursue IPO

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

PEPSI-COLA PRODUCTS PHILIPPINES Inc. is set to go public early next year to raise roughly P7.9 billion and finance expansion plans.

The Philippine Stock Exchange said yesterday in a memo to brokers that the local Pepsi bottler would list 1.31 billion shares at P6.04 a share.

Pepsi would sell up to 380.78 million new shares and 761.56 million shares held by existing shareholders, namely, Guoco Assets Philippines Inc. and The Nassim Fund.

The Singapore-based Nassim Fund could issue an additional 171.35 million shares, depending on market demand.

An international book-building process will run from Jan. 8 to 18, with the domestic offer period set on Jan. 21 to 28.

The listing has been tentatively set for February 1 next year.

UBS Investment Bank will be the lead underwriter for the international offer while ATR Kim Eng and BDO Capital are the joint domestic underwriters.

The company will use the net proceeds from the combined offer to partly finance planned capital expenses for 2008 and 2009.

Pepsi has set a budget of P2.275 billion for additional noncarbonated beverage production facilities, the expansion of some carbonated beverage plants, and the launch of new products.

Pepsi is the licensed bottler of PepsiCo beverages in the Philippines.

Its products include juices, iced teas, sports drinks and energy drinks.

Its soft drinks and beverage brands include Pepsi, Diet Pepsi, Pepsi Light, Pepsi Max, 7Up, Mountain Dew, Gatorade, Lipton Iced Tea, Tropicana, Propel and Sting.

In 2006, it sold 110 million eight ounce equivalents of carbonated beverages and 10 million eight ounce equivalent cases of noncarbonated beverages.

It also manufactures and packages products at 11 production plants nationwide and distributes them through 106 sales offices and warehouses.

As of June 30, Pepsi-Cola Philippines' net income was P1 billion, up from P868.74 million in the same period in 2006.

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Semiconductor firm sets up training unit

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—TEXAS INSTRUMENTS Philippines Inc. (Tipi) is developing an Asian Center of Excellence in the country as it prepares to expand its presence in the region.

Officials of the top semiconductor firm announced its plans at the University of the Cordilleras last Dec. 1, when the firm linked up with the school and the Commission on Higher Education (CHEd) to fast track an P80-million "information technology (IT) bridge program."

UC is one of eight Philippine universities tasked by a national technical working group to implement President Macapagal-Arroyo's cyber corridor project.

Ms Arroyo has identified this information technology belt that links Baguio to other cities as a "super region."

The University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City, and the UP Open University; Asia Pacific Regional College; Nova Computer College; Polytechnic University of the Philippines; Cebu Institute of Technology; and Mindanao State University's Iligan Institute of Technology are undertaking their own IT bridge programs until the end of the month.

Russell Henarie, worldwide manager for the Dallas-based TI Center of Excellence, formalized Tipi's commitments to the "super region" in a program last week.

The program's main goal is to prepare graduate degree training modules that would help schools match the skills of new graduates "with the requirements of the industry through training," according to the program manual.

Tipi's main plant at the Baguio City Economic Zone has been developing apprenticeship programs with various Baguio schools.

Kepco starts construction of 200-MW plant

By Abigail L. Ho

KEPCO-SPC POWER CORP., A PARTNERship between Kepco Philippines Corp. and SPC Power Corp., has awarded a $300-million contract to Doosan Heavy Industries and Construction Companies Ltd. for the establishment of a 200-megawatt (MW) coal-fired power plant in Naga, Cebu.

Under the engineering and construction contract, the two 100-MW units of the new plant should be completed in 39-42 months.

In a statement, the joint venture company said the facility would use circulating fluidized bed combustion technology - a clean coal technology that complies with stringent environmental laws, including the Philippine Clean Air Act and World Bank standards.

"KSPC took the risk of establishing the first power generation plant under the (Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001) without any government guarantee, not only to strengthen our Philippine investment portfolio, but also to address the projected power shortage in the Visayas grid and bring employment and business opportunities for Cebu," KSPC president Lee Kang Won said.

Once completed, KSPC's Naga, Cebu plant would serve the power requirements of six electric cooperatives in the area.

The six cooperatives all signed power sales contracts with KSPC for 120 MW of power.

Korea Electric Power Corp.'s Philippine operations currently include Kephilco, which operates the 650-MW Malaya Thermal Power Plant in Rizal, and Kepco Ilijan Corp., which operates the 1,200-MW Ilijan Combined Cycle Power Plant in Batangas.

The Korean power giant accounts for around 15 percent of the country's installed generation capacity.

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Rebellion

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

WAY BACK IN MEDIEVAL times, Cardinal Richelieu, Chief Minister of France (that was before the separation of Church and State), established the principle that any rebellion against the Crown should be punished mercilessly, no matter how high the culprit's rank, and, even at the cost of seven individual rights.

Richelieu dealt decisively with the Huguenot rebels. He exiled the Queen Mother herself and the ambitious King's brother for plotting against the Throne.

In short, when a rebellion threatens the security of the State, government should act swiftly (ruthlessly, if necessary), and with all the might at its command. Quelling a rebellion must be pursued at all costs. The security of the State was primordial.

Also, in our day of instant communications, you do not wait for a rebellion to gather steam, or for the rebels to build barricades across Ayala, or for rivers of blood to flow down the avenue, before you act. You must nip the rebellion in the bud.

So, when Senator Trillanes and Gen. Danny Lim mounted their rebellion from the relative safety of a function room in the Peninsula hotel in Makati, it was not necessary for the government to seek a ruling from the Supreme Court, or ask the Department of Justice for an opinion, or stage a debate at the Integrated Bar before deciding to move in on the rebels.

It was absolutely correct for the government to quickly deploy, instead, enough of its best troops (the battle-hardened Marines, no less), with their armored personnel carriers, and commanded on the ground by some of our highest-ranking general officers, to put down the rebellion before the day was done.

So what if shock-and-awe tactic was used? So what if it was overkill? It worked, didn't it? This time, the end justified the means. That was all that really mattered.

In the ensuing roundup after the surrender of Trillanes and Lim and, what was the name of the third culprit?—Oh, yes, former VP Guingona, a number of media people were handcuffed and brought to camp for processing.

Afterward, the uproar from media resulted in the dialog at the Pen between government forces headed by Secretary Puno arrayed against such media stalwarts as Maria Ressa and Jessica Sojo.

Nursing a bad cold, I watched the entire comedy show in my bedroom.

Maria and Jessica, as well as the rest of the media in attendance, ranted that the arrest of reporters was an attack on press freedom.

Besides, the reporters were just doing their job of providing information the Filipino people had the constitutional right to know. But the information the TV networks feed the Filipino people is sometimes manipulative, if not downright deceptive.

Your TV screen will show a demonstration of as few as a dozen screaming people with placards. The small TV screen gives the impression of a large demonstration. But, what really happened was that the demonstrators (usually hired at P200 a head) are only posing for the TV camera. After the footage is taken, everybody goes home.

Media said that the arrest of the reporters had a chilling effect on similar incidents in the future. In fact, if there was a firefight at the Pen, the reporters would have been caught in the crosshairs—and chilled.

Maria and Jessica and everybody else there were really concerned over the ratings of their programs. The higher the ratings, the higher the advertising rates. The higher the advertising rates, the higher the net profits.

I have nothing against profits. In our free enterprise system, everybody (including insurance brokers like myself) works for a positive bottom line.

But, I cannot stand self-righteousness. And, on top of everything else, in quelling a rebellion, nobody, not even media people, has any rights.

APC unit prepares to start geothermal venture in Kalinga

Deal covers 59% of planned service area

By Abigail L. Ho

ARAGORN POWER AND ENERGY CORP. (Apec), a subsidiary of listed firm APC Group Inc., has gotten the consent of a group of indigenous people in Kalinga for the use of portion of their ancestral land for the firm's geothermal power production project.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, APC Group corporate secretary Edmundo Tan said Apec and partner Guidance Management Corp. had signed a memorandum of agreement with the indigenous cultural communities and indigenous people (ICC/IP) of Kalinga.

The signing of the agreement, which was facilitated by the National Commission on Indigenous People, formed part of the process for securing the Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) of the affected ICC/IP in the area, he explained.

The agreement is one of the requirements for the Department of Energy's award of a geothermal service contract to Apec. It contains the terms and conditions for the implementation of the geothermal project, as well as the benefits for the affected ICC/IP and the obligations and responsibilities of the parties involved.

The ICC/IP that signed the agreement included the Balatoc, Colayo, Guinaang, Dangtalan and Dalupa Ableg. The deal covers a total area of 14,724 hectares or 59 percent of the geothermal service area, Tan said.

"Negotiations for the remaining five ancestral domains who have signified their support for the project are ongoing," he said. "With the granting of the FPIC by the ICC/IP, the NCIP will issue a certificate precondition required by the DOE for the granting of a geothermal service contract to Apec."

In an earlier interview, APC Group chair and president Willy Ocier said this was the only remaining requirement that the company needed to comply with to pave the way for APC's acquisition of a concession for the geothermal site from the DOE.

Apec had filed applications with the DOE for two geothermal sites in the Cordilleras: Acupan in Benguet (27,500 ha) and Batong Buhay in Kalinga (26,250 ha).

The power generation potential of these two sites had been placed at 20 megawatts (MW) and 120 MW to 200 MW, respectively.

COMPUTER LITERACY PROGRAM
US Ambassador Kristie A. Kenney explains the contents of a website to high school students of Southern City Colleges in Zamboanga City as they access the World Wide Web through the computers their school received from USAID's Computer Literacy and Internet Connection Program, a component of USAID's Growth with Equity in Mindanao Program. CLIC has so far provided computers and Internet access to 655 schools in conflict-affected areas of Mindanao.

Philcomsat faction elevates case to Court of Appeals

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE LOCSIN-POBLADOR FACTION OF the Philcomsat group of companies yesterday scored a Makati City regional trial court judge and the rival Africa-Bildner group for allegedly ignoring a decision of a higher court on their long-running dispute.

In a manifestation filed yesterday, the Locsin-Poblador group asked the Court of Appeals to "place on record the disrespect for the writ of preliminary injunction being perpetrated by the RTC Makati City and parties."

The Philippine Overseas Telecommunications Corp. (POTC) and the Philippine Communications Satellite Corp. (Philcomsat) are both sequestered firms, having been confiscated from alleged Marcos associates in the late 1990s. After a compromise agreement, both are now controlled by private shareholders, while its listed subsidiary, Philcomsat Holdings Corp., remains under the control of government-appointed directors.

"The records of this case reveal that Erlinda I. Bildner, purportedly in representation of POTC and Philcomsat, had questioned the issuance of the writ and had prayed that the same be lifted," the Locsin-Poblador group said in their complaint before the appellate court.

"Not content with this, she had even filed a petition for certiorari before the Supreme Court, raising the same issue and reiterating her challenge to the writ, despite the pendency of her motion to lift before this honorable court."

"The badges of forum-shopping are clear, more so with her recent filing of the complaint before the RTC of Makati City," it added.

The move is the latest in a long series

PHILCOMSAT/ B8

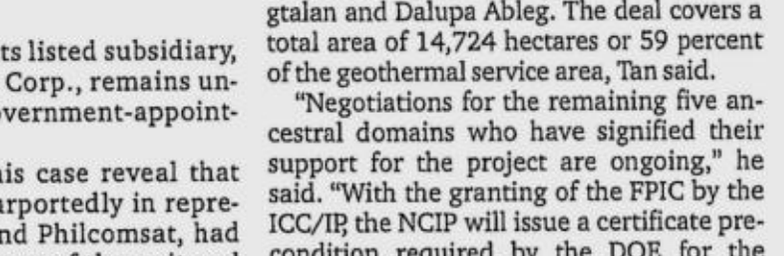
RLC starts mixed-use venture in E. Visayas

ROBINSONS LAND CORP. RECENTLY UNveiled its latest provincial mall project in Tacloban City, Robinsons Tacloban, which is expected to break ground by the first quarter of 2008 and to open by the end of 2008.

The two-level shopping mall will rise on a 4-hectare property in Tacloban City, Leyte, the largest province in Eastern Visayas.

"We will build a full-service shopping mall with a gross floor area of 30,000 square meters. Robinsons Department Store, Robinsons Supermarket, Robinsons Appliances, Handyman Do It Best plus three cinemas will be opening side by side with other establishments like food, fashion and service outlets. We are also welcoming both national and local retailers to join us in our commercial centers undertaking," says Cornelio S. Mapa Jr., general manager of Robinsons Malls.

Future developments are also expected to rise within the complex grounds, including a site for a three-story call center building, with a 700-seat capacity.



AN ARTIST'S perspective of the Tacloban mall project

BPI sees 12% ...

From page B3

marily through BPI.

US-based Xoom, one of the world's leading Internet-based remittance service provider, and Al Rahji Bank of Saudi Arabia, also recently signed a cash-transfer partnership deal with BPI.

"We're (also) expanding in Europe—Spain and Italy. We're upgrading our branch in Barcelona and we're setting up an office in Turin," Tan said.

In the United States, Tan said BPI would soon open a remittance center in Sacramento, California, after opening a second branch in Las Vegas.

"And of course, we have our London office," she said.

She added that BPI was also negotiating remittance tie-ups with partners in Australia and Canada.

PNOC unit ...

From page B3

venture with Sta. Lucia Realty.

Two years ago, PNOC said it expected to raise at least P1.3 billion from the sale of its 51-percent stake in PDMC, representing the sale of 35 million shares to a foreign firm with local partners.

After letting go of its 51-percent shareholdings in PDMC, PNOC would then offer 10 percent of its real estate arm to the public through such channels as an initial public offering or a sale to small investors.

PNOC would then end up owning just 35 percent of PDMC.

The planned stake sale, however, was eventually dropped, with PNOC choosing to just do a straight asset sale.

Exports jumped 10.5% ...

From page B1

tive growth in exports was still just about half of the government's official target of 11 percent for 2007. Exporters said the double-digit target was no longer attainable given the challenges that faced their sector this year.

These included the slowing US economy, the Philippines' biggest export market, and the appreciation of the peso.

Other top exports for October were articles of apparel and clothing accessories (accounting for $187.93 million of total export bill for the month, down 18.8 percent year-on-year); cathodes and section of cathodes of refined copper ($152.47 million, up 17 percent); coconut oil ($107.92 million, up 128.4 percent), petroleum ($99.08 million, up 43.1 percent); woodcraft and furniture ($91.43 million, up 4.7 percent), wiring sets for motor vehicles ($82.99 million, up 15.9 percent); metal components ($42.77 million, up 5.5 percent) and bananas ($29.6 million, down 6.9 percent).

The NSO said the United States remained the Philippines' biggest export market, accounting for 17.7 percent of the export earnings for October. Exports to the United States reached $820.62 million, 3.2-percent higher than the $795.56 million in October last year.

Japan was still the second-biggest export destination for Philippine-made products, buying $649.65 million. This was, however, down by 3.4 percent year-on-year.

Other top export markets for September were Hong Kong ($595.32 million), China ($576.66 million), Netherlands ($355.99 million), Singapore ($267.28 million), Malaysia ($238.14 million), Germany ($183.46 million), South Korea ($138.92 million) and Taiwan ($122.47 million).

Peso now at 41.40 to a dollar

From page B1

pectations of another interest rate cut by the US Federal Reserve.

Aside from the strong regional market, the peso also gained further on remittance flows from overseas Filipinos.

Other currencies in the region were also boosted by investors placing more funds in emerging markets ahead of an expected interest rate cut by the US central bank Tuesday night.

"The market was pricing in a 25-basis point interest rate cut by the US Fed," Banco de Oro EPCI Bank chief strategist Jonathan Ravelas said.

The peso opened at 41.52 and hit a low of 41.53 but gained all the way to finish at the day's peak of 41.40 against the greenback. It was the local currency's strongest level since ending at 41.37 to $1 on May 10, 2000.

Volume traded at the Philippine Dealing System was also heavier at $502 million yesterday from Monday's $466 million.

The peso, Asia's best performing currency so far this year, has gained by about 18.6 percent since January.

"The Philippine peso has continued to perform well. This vastly outperforms our own expectations for the yearend peso-dollar rate, and we perceive ourselves bullish on the peso," Bear Stearns & Co. said in a research note.

Remittance flows to the country seasonally peak in the fourth quarter ahead of the Christmas season, the longest and most extravagant season in the predominantly Christian country.

Meanwhile, the Chinese yuan rallied to 7.377 against the dollar, its highest since the revaluation in July 2005, after November inflation in Asia's fastest-growing economy rose at the fastest pace in 11 years.

Citi forecasts 6.8-7.6% growth for RP in next 2 years

From page B2

and rebound from the single-digit growth seen since 2000.

"Corporate investment pledges in 2007, such as Texas Instrument's pledge to add $1 billion for new assembly and capacity, bode well for increased private investment," Citi said.

"We also expect residential private demand to react favorably to more affordable mortgage financing rates offered by banks."

The bank said low domestic interest rates should also augur well for residential mortgage financing.

But the investment cycle is seen peaking as the political cycle starts up with presidential elections in May 2010.

"We expect long-term investors to await the new government's economic blueprint over the medium term prior to deciding on additional exposure," Citi said.

Meanwhile, the government's asset sales are seen to appeal to private capital and help energize the investment setting. As part of the privatization proceeds are foreign currency, prospects for gross international reserves and local currency were also seen favorable.

"Job creation should be at its strongest as the real investment setting improves with construction providing the key source of employment. This could generate 100,000 net new jobs annually over the forecast horizon if capex and residential demand cycles contribute to more construction activity," Citi said.

Incomes from increased employment would augment the remittances in boosting the consumption cycle, the bank said.

Citi also anticipates additional employment from export recovery in 2009—another key source of growth seen to complement the investment recovery.

"After the subprime adjustment by global financial markets and the US economy for much of 2008, we await the firming up of external demand in 2009 that should bode well for exports," Citi said.

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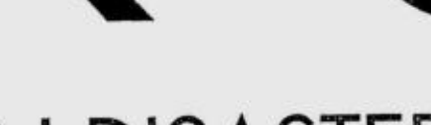

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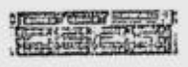

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Buying prices of tobacco increased

Move to encourage farmers to plant more

By Leoncio Balbin Jr.
Inquirer Northern Luzon

CANDON CITY—THE TOBACCO industry is looking at better days ahead, following an agreement forged by the government, tobacco traders and farmers to raise the price of Ilocandia's top cash crop.

In a meeting on Monday, representatives of tobacco manufacturers and traders, farmers and the National Tobacco Administration agreed to raise by P10 the buying price of Class AA tobacco.

The buying price for tobacco under other classes was increased by P9.50.

With the price increase, Class AA tobacco will sell at P61 a kilogram; Class A, P59; Class B, P57; Class C, P55; Class D, P50; Class E, P49; Class F1, P45; Class F2, P42; and reject, P23.

"It is a good start to address the price of tobacco and other concerns [of the industry]. I hope it will inspire our farmers to plant more this season," Ilocos Sur Rep. Eric Singson said.

Singson and Gov. Deogracias Victor Savellano led local officials and leaders of farmers' groups in the tripartite conference held at the NTA offices in Quezon City.

The increase, they said, was the biggest granted as previous tripartite conferences usually yielded an increase of an average of P1.50. The conference is held every two years.

Singson said he would push for the passage of a bill that would require manufacturers to use at least 75 percent of locally produced tobacco in the production of cigarettes in the country.

Had the increase been lower, Singson and Savellano would have asked farmers not to plant tobacco and shift to other cash crops because they would not earn much from tobacco production.

The tobacco season starts in November and lasts until May.

Tobacco, particularly the Virginia type, is the top cash crop in the four tobacco-producing provinces of Ilocos Sur, Ilocos Norte, La Union and Abra.

Ilocos Sur is the top Virginia tobacco producer in the country, with an annual production of 23 million kilograms worth about P1 billion. The province is also the biggest recipient of shares from the tobacco excise tax imposed by Republic Act No. 7171.

Five years ago, the four tobacco-producing provinces received a combined share of P2.4 billion but this has gone down to only P700 million, Singson said.

Cigarette manufacturers used to rely on locally produced tobacco in their products, with an 80 percent usage of local raw materials. However, the ratio has been reversed, as local materials comprise only 20 percent while imported materials comprise 80 percent.

Savellano convened a tobacco summit last month to discuss the problems hobbling the industry. The major roadblock is the low prices of tobacco and the lack of assistance to farmers, he said.

At least P3 million from the provincial government's share from RA 7171 will be released to build tobacco flue curing barns and to help farmers.

"Tobacco helped build our province. It is the main source of [livelihood of] most farmers and [their earnings help] send their children to school. We need to help [the industry] regain its old glory," Savellano said.

Ceasario Gapatan, a tobacco grower from Barangay Bagani Tuggo here, said his fellow farmers were satisfied with the price increase.

"It is good enough to cover the increase of expenses in planting tobacco," said Gapatan, who joined the tripartite conference at the NTA.

Gardenia invests ₱17.5M to widen reach

By Ronnel W. Domingo

GARDENIA BAKERIES PHILIPPINES INC. is investing P17.5 million in additional daily production capacity to expand its market reach.

Simplicio P. Umali Jr., Gardenia president and general manager, said the company has linked up with a facility that could produce 25,000 loaves of bread daily.

"We have invested P10 million for this facility in Tarlac, which has been producing for Gardenia since Dec. 1," Umali said.

He added that an additional P7.5 million would be invested in a pandesal plant in Laguna with a production capacity of 50,000 buns daily.

"These (investments) are all just for extending our market reach in Luzon," Umali said.

Gardenia expects to rack up P1.6 billion in revenues this year, a 23-percent increase from P1.3 billion in 2006.

The official explained that while consumption was not growing, Gardenia was able to increase revenues by expanding its market reach nationwide.

Umali, who is also president of the Philippine Baking Industry Group, explained that industry volumes were expected to contract by 6-8 percent this year due to the increase in prices of inputs.

"Industry players are forced to raise prices of bread, pandesal, and other products and this would affect consumption which is already flattish in the past year," he added.

Still, he said Gardenia expected revenues to reach P2 billion by end-2008, or an increase of 25 percent.

Umali said the company has invested a total of P1 billion in the country so far, consisting of five production plants—three for loaf bread, one for pandesal and another for snack foods.

IPVG bid to buy stake in PeopleSupport under review

By Riza T. Olchondra

CONTACT CENTER OPERATOR PEOpleSupport Inc. is reviewing the bid of listed IT firm IPVG Corp. to acquire a majority stake in the contact center for $355.3 million.

"PeopleSupport has announced that its review of the IPVG-AO Capital proposal is ongoing and that they will respond with a recommendation to shareholders following its review," IPVG said in a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange.

"US market analysts have called the IPVG—AO Capital Proposal, which was an 18 percent premium over PeopleSupport's closing price on Nov. 29 2007, a 'fair one,'" the IT firm said.

IPVG earlier signed a memorandum of understanding with investment house AO Capital Partners Ltd. to create a special purpose vehicle for the acquisition. IPVG currently owns IP-Contact Center Outsourcing Inc. (IPCCO), which acquired the assets of Global Stride, a contact center operation in IBM Plaza, Eastwood City in Libis, earlier this year. IPCCO has operations in the Philippines, Singapore, Vietnam, Hong Kong and India. It also has investments in online gaming.

PeopleSupport, one of IPCCO's rival firms in the Philippine outsourcing industry, is listed in the US Nasdaq and has more than 8,000 call center seats.

Philcomsat faction elevates case to Court of Appeals

From page B6

of legal maneuvers by both camps to dominate the boards of the cash-rich firms.

Last month, the Africa-Bildner group scored a coup after Malacañang appointed a fresh set of nominees to the boards of Philcomsat and POTC, leaving only PHC under the control of the Locsin-Poblador group.

The private shareholders, led by Bildner, have since signified their intention to wrest control of PHC from their rivals.

At stake is about P800 million to P1 billion of the group's cash and near-cash assets which the Bildner has accused the government nominees of dissipating over the years.

In their latest complaint to the Court of Appeals, the Locsin-Poblador group said that Bilder's earlier complaint filed with the Makati RTC "is a patent violation of the writ issued by [the appellate court] and a circumvention of its clear directives" stopping the implementation of an earlier RTC decision.

"What is unfortunate is that the Presiding Judge Selma Palacio Alaras of the RTC Makati City, Branch 62, is allowing and condoning the utter disregard of the writ of preliminary injunction issued by this honorable court," the group told the Court of Appeals. "The conduct of the proceedings before the Makati Court likewise disrespects and undermines the authority of this honorable court."

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Stocks bounce, dollar firms ahead of Fed decision

Hong Kong, South Korean stock markets lead region's gainers

SINGAPORE—ASIAN SHARES bounced and the dollar firmed yesterday following confidence-boosting cash injections into struggling financial firms and in anticipation of a US interest rate cut.

Markets have fully priced in a quarter-point cut in the Federal Reserve's benchmark rate later on Tuesday, but recent positive US economic data dashed expectations of a more aggressive move, lifting the dollar and pressuring government bonds.

Stock market investors took heart from Monday's news of cash injections into Swiss bank UBS and US bond insurer MBIA Inc., both of which are struggling with the fallout of the US subprime mortgage market crisis.

"These moves have created a sense of reassurance in the market about the subprime issue, and this along with expectations of a US rate cut, will support stocks," said Masayoshi Yano, senior manager of investment information at Tokai Tokyo Securities.

Tokyo's Nikkei average closed 0.8 percent higher, while MSCI's measure of other Asia Pacific stocks gained 1 percent by early yesterday afternoon, tracking similar Wall Street gains and erasing Monday's losses.

The MSCI index is about 8 percent below its Nov. 1 record high, but has rallied nearly 39 percent this year, triple the rise for MSCI's key world stock index.

Across the region, Hong Kong and South Korean stock markets led gainers, rising around 1 percent.

Investors snapped up Asian financial stocks, encouraged by news that some big cash-rich players found the battered sector attractive.

UBS on Monday revealed a $10 billion writedown, joining a growing list of casualties of the subprime crisis, but also reported an emergency injection of some $11.5 billion from Singapore and the Middle East. Similarly, MBIA said buyout firm Warburg Pincus has agreed to invest $1 billion in the company.

"The UBS news is big. It brought home anew the power of oil money and sent an assuring message that there is enough money out there and the financial world is in no danger of falling into a crisis," said Hitoshi Yamamoto, CEO of Fortis Asset Management Japan.

South Korea's Woori Finance Holdings rose 2.5 percent and Australia's top investment bank Macquarie Group gained 4 percent.

Traders said markets have fully factored in a quarter point cut in the benchmark rate to 4.25 percent, but uncertainty over the Fed's message about outlook for next year kept many investors sidelined.

Government bonds, which usually benefit from rate cuts, extended their overnight retreat as market players further unwound bets on an aggressive half-point cut after surprisingly firm data from the troubled US housing market.

Japan's benchmark 10-year bond yield hit a one-month high at 1.580 percent, tracking overnight falls in US Treasuries.

US debt prices, however, edged up in Asian trade.

Receding fears of a sharp US economic slowdown and fading expectations of aggressive Fed cuts helped the dollar, which hit a one-month high against the yen at 111.95, before retreating to 111.80, still way above a 2-½ low of 107.22 yen hit last month.

The euro was little changed against the dollar at around $1.4720 and a touch firmer against the yen.

Traders said the dollar was likely to hold steady until the Fed decision, with high yielding currencies such as the Australian dollar and the sterling most likely to benefit from recovering risk appetite at the expense of the low-yielding yen.

Oil prices edged up above $88 as dense fog slowed imports along a key Texas waterway.

But crude remained well below last month's record high near $100 with forecasts of mild winter in the United States and lingering concerns about the health of the US economy suggesting softer demand in the world's top consumer market. *Reuters*

US SECRETARY of Health and Human Services Mike Leavitt (left) speaks with vice chair of China's General Administration for Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ), Wei Chuan Zhong, during a visit to the Huiyuan Food and Beverage plant in Beijing. Leavitt toured the factory as China warned rising protectionist sentiment in the United States was damaging trade ties. AFP

China's consumer inflation blazed to 11-yr high in Nov.

BEIJING—CHINA'S ANNUAL CONSUMER price inflation sped to an 11-year high in November at 6.9 percent, with new signs that price pressures were spreading beyond food to the broader economy.

China also logged a $26.3 billion trade surplus in November, data published on Tuesday showed. The level dipped below October's record of $27.1 billion, but the country's surging exports were barely dented by the slowing US economy.

China's gaping trade surplus—along with the undervalued yuan and other policies seen by foreign critics as boosting the surplus—will feature heavily at high-level Sino-American talks set for this week in Beijing.

But economists are giving closer scrutiny to inflation, which has been driven largely by food costs that make up a third of the CPI basket.

The numbers pointed to pressures seeping beyond food items, where annual price rises were still highest, up 18.2 percent in November, to the broader economy, from utilities to travel costs.

The nonfood consumer price index climbed 1.4 percent in November year on year, above the 1.1 percent increase in October, and the sharpest rise this year.

"That's more of a source of concern, an indication that there's more tightness in commodity markets in China and of possible overheating," said David Cohen, economist at Action Economics in Singapore.

Full-year consumer price inflation is likely to register a rise of about 4.7 percent, which would be the highest since 1996, chief economist of the National Bureau of Statistics, Yao Jingyuan, said on Tuesday.

Last week, China's top leaders announced they would shift to a "tight" monetary policy from what they called a decade-long "prudent" stance. The stubbornly high consumer price inflation should reinforce their determination, analysts said.

"We expect the central bank to respond to the strong inflation data with additional tightening measures," Yu Song, Goldman Sachs economist in Hong Kong, said in a note to clients.

On Saturday, the central bank raised the proportion of deposits that banks must hold in reserve by a full percentage point to 14.5 percent as part of its drive to tame credit growth and inflation.

It was the 10th reserve requirement increase this year by the central bank, which has also raised interest rates five times in 2007.

China's exports grew at 22.8 percent in November from the same period a year ago, while imports climbed 25.3 percent, both figures broadly in line with the pace set in October.

"Even though China's exports to the US have slowed down, its exports to the Eurozone and the Middle East and other nontraditional markets have held up really well," Tao Wang, chief economist at Bank of America in Beijing said. *Reuters*

Consumer confidence in Japan lowest since '03

TOKYO—JAPANESE CONSUMER CONFIDence fell in November to its lowest level in nearly four years as rising energy costs and grocery prices turned off householders, a government survey showed on Tuesday.

The sixth fall in confidence in the past seven months adds to worries about consumption, which makes up the lion's share of the economy, and will do nothing to alter expectations that Japan's very low interest rates are stuck on hold until late next year.

The Japanese government acknowledged sentiment was "worsening"—the most negative word it has used to describe household sentiment in almost five years.

"It is tough for consumers as prices are on a rise while a recovery in wages remain sluggish," said Noriaki Haseyama, economist at Dai-ichi Life Research Institute.

"The survey suggests that consumption in November was probably weak and will remain sluggish for a while."

The Cabinet Office's household sentiment index, which includes views on incomes and jobs in homes with more than two residents, was 39.8 in November, its lowest since December 2003.

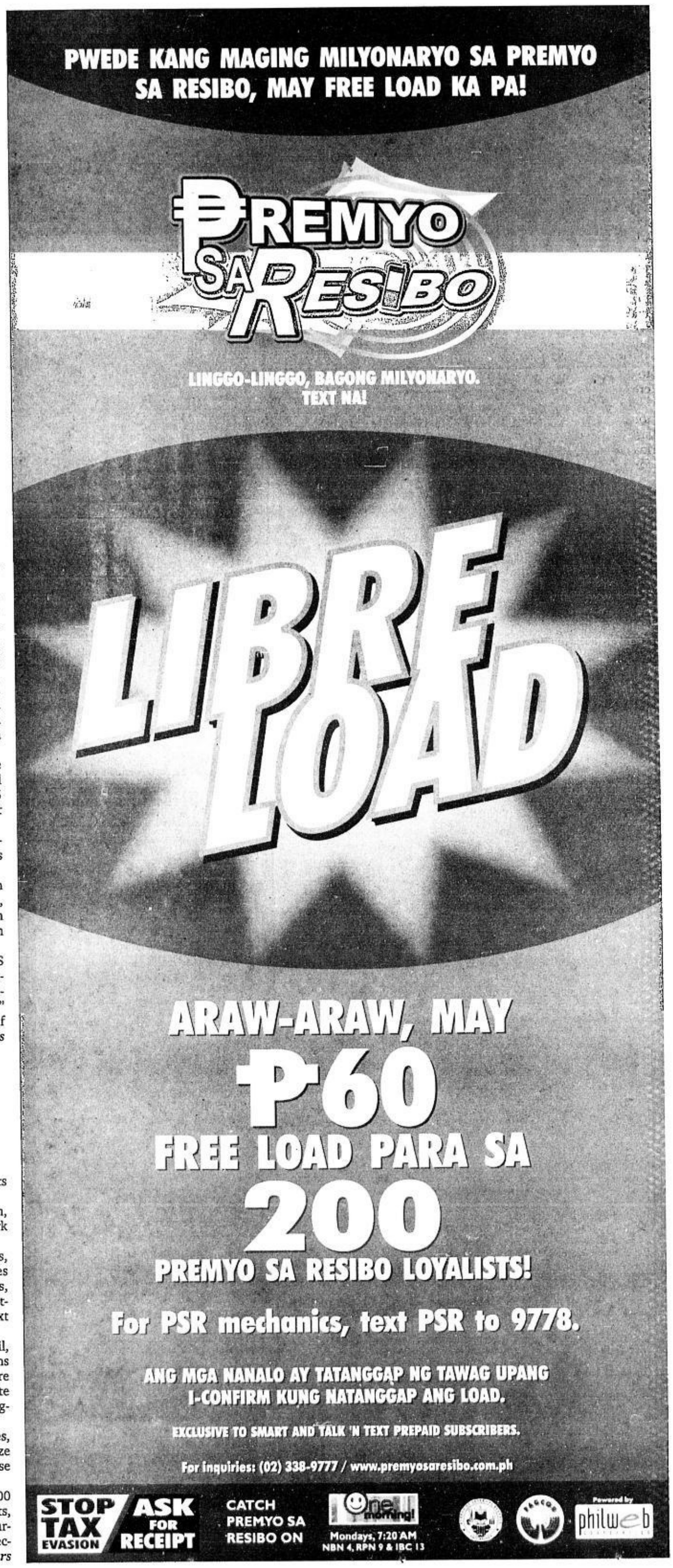
A reading below 50 suggests pessimism, although it has rarely been above that mark in 25 years—not even in boom times.

After nearly a decade of falling prices, Japanese people now face rises in prices for daily necessities and energy costs, with 82 percent of those surveyed expecting the cost of living to go up in the next year.

Rising prices of gasoline, heating oil, bread, mayonnaise and other food items have been widely reported in Japan, where wages have been stubbornly weak despite falling unemployment and official price figures still show mild deflation.

To ease the pain from rising oil prices, Japan said on Tuesday it would subsidize home heating oil in cold areas and increase financial help for small firms.

The weak figures, from a survey of 3,500 households with at least two residents, came a day after another government survey showed sentiment among service sector workers at a 4-1/2-year low. *Reuters*



Globe backs 2nd Micro Entrepreneur Trade Fair

IN LINE WITH THE VISION OF SMALL AND MEDIUM ENtrepreneurs (SMEs) to work together in leading our county towards economic growth, Globe backs the 2nd Micro Entrepreneurs Trade Fair, an event that provides a venue for showcasing not only the products of SMEs, but also a venue where SMEs come together to foster a mutually beneficial alliance.

This year's fair, dubbed "Negosyong Pinoy 2007", showcased different business opportunities in all segments, highlighting home-grown businesses, products and services offered to aspiring or growing entrepreneurs. The event also boasted of an exhibit of suppliers, service providers, financial institutions and presentations from various business owners on in-demand ventures and ideas.

"Negosyong Pinoy 2007" is organized by the Center for Small Entrepreneurs Inc (CSE)-a non-stock, non-profit entrepreneurial center whose primary thrust is to promote entrepreneurship through enterprise building and development with focus on SMEs.

Globe Business has actively campaigned for the empowerment of SMEs. It has partnered with both the public and private sector to help micro entrepreneurs establish their businesses. Globe takes pride in teaming up with other believers in the potential of SMEs, hence the company stalwartly supports organizations such as CSE and its projects, like the Micro Entrepreneurs Trade Fair.

DIAGEO PARTY LAUNCH FEATURES OVER 200 BRANDS

The world's leading premium drinks business raised another big toast with the launch of its Diageo Party, with more than 200 products. Diageo marked this special occasion at Fiamma Bar & Ristauranti in Makati as an extraordinary way of celebrating life everyday and everywhere with Diageo brands. 'Our brands offer consumers a variety of ways to mark big events in their lives and brighten small ones', says John Alonte, managing director of Diageo Philippines. Shown, from left, are: Host Sam Oh, with Diageo executives Agnes Landig, Charles Palanca IV, Charles Palanca III, John Alonte and Jasper Evangelista.

Starmaker mounts pyro musical shows

"We like the way the audiences react in our weekly shows at Mall of Asia. They appreciate our shows," says Doy Tan, managing director of Starmaker Fireworks, the country's number one fireworks and special effects manufacturer. Viewers to the pyromusical shows at the Mall of Asia must have seen the award-winning fireworks that continue to amaze thousands of visitors to the MOA every Friday and Saturday at 7 p.m. "We always give our audiences something new and different. We present special effects they have not seen before. We try to do different things every week," he says. The fireworks display is accompanied by music which is usually happy and danceable. "Filipinos are a happy people. They love to celebrate. Music is one thing that separates our pyromusicals from other pyromusical shows all over the world." Shows at the Mall of Asia, Robinsons and Alabang Town Center last between 3 to 5 minutes. Starmaker is also preparing a New Year show at the Mall of Asia. For inquiries, call Starmaker at 534-2655 or visit www.starmakerfireworks.com.

TeleTech holds biggest BPO party this Christmas

TELETECH, THE LARGEST AND FASTEST GROWING BPO company in the Philippines, played host to the biggest gathering of call center agents in celebration of a rousing year for the company.

No less than 6,000 employees gathered Dec 8 at the Silver City strip in Pasig City for the company's holiday party.

Bamboo, one of the country's hottest bands today, wowed the crowd with an electrifying performance.

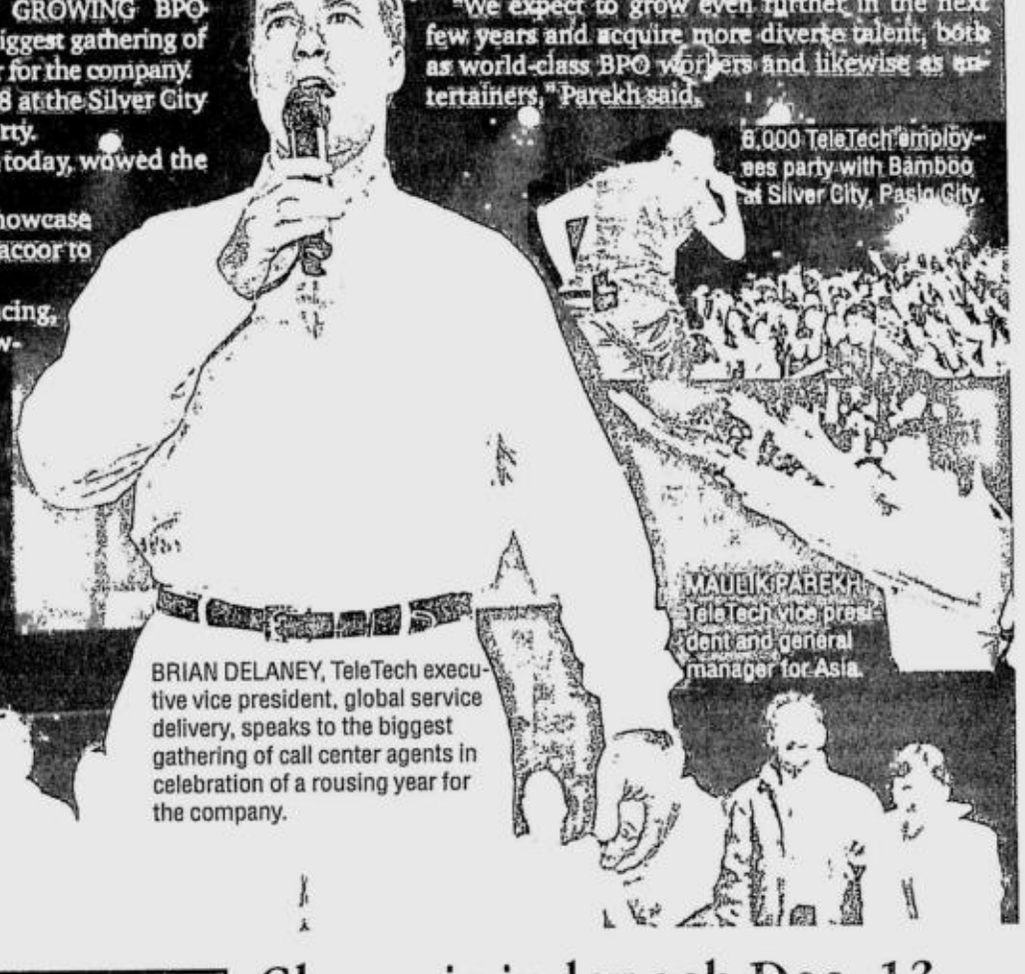
But the real highlight of the party was the showcase of talents from different TeleTech sites-from Bacoor to Cainta to Novaliches and Pasay.

The presentations include bands, street dancing, a fashion show and even a "TeleTech Idol Showdown".

"This demonstrates the other side of skills our agents possess, not only in providing our clients with world-class BPO services. It's a celebration of the Filipino talent by itself," said Maulik Parekh, TeleTech vice president and general manager for Asia.

TeleTech is also celebrating a milestone in its five-year history in the Philippines. The country recently achieved its target of 15,000 workers, making it among the biggest BPO operators in the country today.

"We expect to grow even further in the next few years and acquire more diverse talent, both as world-class BPO workers and likewise as entertainers," Parekh said.



8,000 TeleTech employees party with Bamboo at Silver City, Pasig City.

MAULIK PAREKH, TeleTech vice president and general manager for Asia.

BRIAN DELANEY, TeleTech executive vice president, global service delivery, speaks to the biggest gathering of call center agents in celebration of a rousing year for the company.

Glycemic index gab Dec. 13

THE SCHOOL OF NUTRITION of the Philippine Women's University and the Food and Nutrition Research Institute of the Department of Science and Technology will hold a symposium "Glycemic Index: A Tool for Wellness," on Dec. 13, 1 p.m. at Isla Ballroom 3 of Edsa Shangri-la Hotel, Ortigas Center, Pasig City.

Resource speaker is Thomas MS Wolever, professor at the Department of Institutional Sciences of University of Toronto, Canada and president of Glycemic Index (GI) Laboratories in Canada.

Well-known for his works on the symposium theme, Wolever's research interests include the effects of dietary carbohydrates on human physiology and metabolism.

The visiting expert said his presentation will illustrate the importance of GI, a method of assessing the quality of dietary carbohydrates according to the extent to which the food raises the blood sugar.

"The symposium aims to inform the public, notably health professionals, food manufacturers and regulatory board members of its importance in human health and diseases and will also tackle the applicability of the GI concept to nutrition labeling," he said.

The program starts with a prayer to be led by PWU chaplain Msgr. Hernando Coronel, followed with the welcome remarks by Chancellor Dr. Dolores Lasan.

An overview and historical perspective of GI will be delivered by Dr. Trinidad Trinidad of DOST.

The panel of reactors to the lecture of Wolever who will be introduced by Dr. Leonora Panlasigui, dean of PWU School of Nutrition, are Dr. Luisito Llido of St. Luke's Medical Center, Habib Chammas of Nestle Philippines Inc and Dr. Leticia Gutierrez of the DOH.

Preceding the open forum to be presided by associate dean Erlinda Evora, PWU president, is Dr. Amelou B. Reyes who will give an inspirational message.

To present the synthesis and summary of the lecture is Dr. Mario Capanzana of DOST, while Executive Director Dr. Jaime Montoya of PCHRD-DOST will deliver the closing remarks. Serving as master of ceremonies is Aida Malillin of DOST.

The one-day lecture is sponsored by Cargill, Nestle Nutrition, and Del Monte.

Art and music under one roof Dec. 15!

FOR DECADES, TATTOOS AND rock and roll have always been associated with rebellion and counter culture-both a badge of one's individuality and uniqueness. Tribal Gear, the people behind many of the nation's trendiest outfits, presents "Dutdutan '07", a fusion of rock concert and tattoo competition which is going to be held on Dec. 15 at the Philippine Trade and Training Center Hall B. Philippine Tattoo Artist Guild (PhilTAG) president Ricky Sta. Ana aims to uplift the standard of the tattoo industry, and there's no better way to showcase this than through a competition that features not only visual artists but performing artists as well, such as Beatmatics, Concrete Sam, Cosmic Love, D-Coy, Greyhoundz, Kadanngyan, Kamikazee, Niniskirt, Queso, Sinag, Sinosikat, Slapshock, Urbandub and Valley of Chrome. Tickets are available at the gate and at the Skinworkz Tattoo and Body Piercing Shop (Pasilyo D19 Cartimar Arcade, Pasay City) with contact number 845-5001.

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
Regional Office No. IV-A
3rd Flr., Andenson Bldg., II, Brgy. Parian, Calamba City

December 12, 2007

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s.

Name and Address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National/Citizenship	Position
1. ULTRA-PAK PHILIPPINES CORPORATION FCIE, Brgy. Langkaan, Dasmariñas, Cavite	Mr. Huallun Chen/ Chinese	Supervisor
2. ULTRA-PAK PHILIPPINES CORPORATION FCIE, Brgy. Langkaan, Dasmariñas, Cavite	Mr. Ming-Hung Hsu/ Taiwanese	Manager
3. ULTRA-PAK PHILIPPINES CORPORATION FCIE, Brgy. Langkaan, Dasmariñas, Cavite	Mr. Shiang-Wei Hsieh/ Taiwanese	Manager
4. TAIKISHA PHILIPPINES, INC. Legaspi Village, Makati City & c/o Toshiba, Laguna Technopark, Binan, Laguna	Mr. Ryokichi Uzumaki/ Japanese	Cleanroom Design Engineer
5. AMKOR TECHNOLOGY PHILIPPINES, INC. Laguna Technopark, Binan, Laguna	Mr. Ying-Chih Chen/ Taiwanese	Section Manager, FLIPCHIP
6. HOUSE RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT PTE., LTD. CEZ, Rosario, Cavite	Mr. Kellchi Kakihara/ Japanese	Technical Adviser – R & D Ventilation System
7. HOUSE RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT PTE., LTD. CEZ, Rosario, Cavite	Mr. Yoshihito Hakamata/ Japanese	Manager – Frame Maintenance
8. HOUSE RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT PTE., LTD. CEZ, Rosario, Cavite	Mr. Hiroshi Izutani/ Japanese	Manager – Frame Logistics

If you have any information/objection to the above-mentioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

ATTY. RICARDO S. MARTINEZ, SR., CESO III
Regional Director

(PDI – December 12, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Commission on Human Rights (CHR) through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) invites interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following:

PROJECT NO. 1

DESCRIPTION	SUPPLY OF IT EQUIPMENT
LOCATION	Commission on Human Rights U.P. Complex, SAAC Building Commonwealth Ave., Diliman, Quezon City
APPROVED BUDGET	P1,496,000.00 (Regular Capital Outlay)
PRE-BID CONFERENCE	December 21, 2007, 2:00 p.m. Conference Room
SUBMISSION AND OPENING OF BIDS	January 11, 2008, 10:00 a.m. CHR Conference Room

SPECIFICATION

No. of Units	Description
One (1)	Server Machine
One (1)	Server Machine
One (1)	500 GB cap. USB 2.0 Interface External Hard drive
Nineteen (19)	Small Form Factor PC With built-in power supply
Ten (10)	Desktop PC
Two (2)	Desktop PC
Nineteen (19)	Printer, Fax, Scanner and Copier (all-in-one)
Sixteen (16)	Win XP Professional OEM License (Service Pack 2)

Bidding Documents shall be issued upon payment of a non-refundable amount of ONE THOUSAND PESOS (Php 1,000.00). The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

PROJECT NO. 2

DESCRIPTION	SUPPLY OF IT EQUIPMENT
LOCATION	U.P. Complex, SAAC Building, Commonwealth Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
APPROVED BUDGET	Php 820,000.00 (EJK Fund)
PRE-BID CONFERENCE	December 21, 2007, 2:00 p.m. Conference Room
SUBMISSION AND OPENING OF BIDS	January 11, 2008, 10:00 a.m. Conference Room

SPECIFICATIONS

No. of Units	Item Description
Two (2)	Desktop PC
One (1)	Server Machine
One (1)	Server Machine
Ten (10)	Small Form Factor PC with Built-in power supply
Ten (10)	Win XP Professional OEM License (Service Pack 2)

Bidding Documents shall be issued upon payment of a non-refundable amount of FIVE HUNDRED PESOS (Php 500.00). The Bidding Documents shall be received by the prospective bidder or his authorized representative.

Interested parties are advised to submit Letter of Intent and photocopy of their Latest Certificate of Registration of Business Name (with original for authentication) from December 17-19, 2007.

Eligibility Statement Forms shall be issued on December 17-19, 2007. Duly Accomplished Eligibility Statements shall be placed in a Sealed envelope and shall be submitted to the Chairman, CHR-BAC, Commission on Human Rights, SAAC Building, U.P. Complex, Commonwealth Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City from December 20-21, 2007.

Bid Documents shall be made available only to eligible bidders for issuance upon payment of fee at the BAC Secretariat, upon presentation of the original Certificate of Eligibility.

Bid Proposals shall be submitted in two (2) sealed brown envelopes with the name of the project to be bid and the name of the bidder in capital letters addressed to the Chairman of the CHR Bids and Awards Committee, SAAC Building, U.P. Complex Diliman, Quezon City. The "First Envelope" shall contain the accomplished Technical Statements and the "Second Envelope" shall contain the financial proposal.

All particulars relative to Eligibility, Bid Bond, Performance Bond, Pre-Bid Conference, Bid Envaluation and Award of Contract shall be governed by the provisions of Republic Act No. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

The CHR reserves the right to reject any or all bids/eligibility statements to declare a failure of bidding if there is, among others, reason to waive any required formally in the bids received, and to accept the bid most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) COMM. ELIGIO P. MALLARI
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - Dec. 12, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National/Citizenship	Position
WEPHONE ONLINE, INC. Unit A, 21/F Strata 2000 Bldg., Emerald Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Myung Chul Jang Korean	Manager
MARINE BENEFITS ASSISTANCE SERVICE, INC. Suite 1903 19/F Peak Tower, 107 LP Leviste St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Ivar Hanestad Norwegian	President
HITACHI ASIA LTD. 25/F Pacific Star Bldg. Makati Ave. cor. Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City	Hitoshi Goto Japanese	General Manager
COLLAGE BEVERLY HILLS-PHILIPPINES, INC. 189 Mindanao Ave., Toro, Quezon City	Shigeki Ogaki Japanese	Salon System Consultant & Specialist
SUJIN MARITIMA SHIPPING INC. 2/F Tivoli Greens, Batasan Hills, Quezon City	Seungho Han Korean	Senior Accountant
HANBIA ENGLISH TUTORIAL CENTER Blk 22 Lot 27 Jasmine St., TS Cruz Subdivision, Las Pinas City	Yongjin Choi Korean	Marketing Manager
AMAZING PHIL. THEATRE INC. Manila Film Center, Leona Florentino cor. Dela Rama Sts., Cultural Center of the Philippines, Roxas Blvd., Manila	Jin Yeong Kwak Korean	Consultant
JABEZ INT'L. EDUCATIONAL CENTER INC. 6/F Polaris Bldg., #48 Polaris St., Bel-Air Village, Makati City	Jong Ho Hyun Korean	Manager
SINCLAIR KNIGHT MERZ 35/F Orient Square Bldg., Emerald Ave., Ortigas Ctr., Pasig City	Kim Oxenbridge Australian	Senior Consultant
LARSEN & TOUBROINFOTECH LIMITED 24 & 27/F Tower II, The Enterprise 6766 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Rahul Dattatraya Pawar Indian	System Analyst

If you have any information/objection to the above-mentioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

RAYMUNDO G. AGRAVANTE
OIC-Regional Director

(PDI–December 12, 2007)

US COMPANY LOOKING FOR BUSINESS PARTNER

Capital: **P3,575**

Potential High Return: **P5.5M/month**

Systematic Training Provided

Preview Seminar in Baguio (Dec. 15, '07)

Call Christopher for details:

09153234615
09216235749

Republic of the Philippines
Province of La Union
City of San Fernando 2500
OFFICE OF THE PROVINCIAL TREASURER

December 10, 2007

FINAL NOTICE OF DELINQUENCY

MRS. GINA B. GO, Senior Vice-President & OIC
BAUANG PRIVATE POWER CORPORATION, Brgy. Payocpoc Sur, Bauang, 2501 La Union

Madam :

This is to inform you that our records show that your real property taxes due on property/properties registered in your name listed below remain unpaid from 1995 to July 31, 2007 which have been included in the list of delinquency to be auctioned on February 1, 2008 at the Provincial Capitol, City of San Fernando, La Union pursuant to the provisions of Section 254, Republic Act 7160(the Local Government Code of 1991):

CERTIFIED STATEMENT OF DELINQUENCY

Kind	Lot No.	Blk. No.	Prop. Index No.	TD. No.	Assessed Value	Taxable Year	Amount of Tax	Penalty	TOTAL
Mach.			008-08-010-007-001-M001	010-00486	19,428,730.00	1995-2007	368,574.60	252,813.62	641,388.22
Mach.			008-08-010-007-001-M001	029-01603	21,645,268,480.00	1995-2007	432,905,329.60	281,656,091.14	714,561,420.74
Mach.			008-08-029-034-003-M001	029-01604	4,187,921,640.00	1995-2007	83,758,432.80	54,494,761.70	138,253,194.50
Mach.			008-08-029-034-003-M002	029-01605	108,643,160.00	1995-2007	2,172,863.20	1,412,316.72	3,585,179.92
Mach.			008-08-029-035-003-M003	029-01606	18,131,525,860.00	1995-2007	362,630,517.20	235,933,992.18	598,564,509.38
Mach.			008-08-029-035-003-M004	029-01607	9,682,486,180.00	1995-2007	193,649,723.60	125,992,015.08	319,641,738.68
Mach.			008-08-029-035-003-M002	029-01608	291,604,840.00	1995-2007	5,832,096.80	3,794,954.82	9,627,051.62
Mach.			008-08-029-036-006-M001	029-01609	53,783,710.00	1995-2007	1,075,674.20	699,853.16	1,775,527.36
Mach.			008-08-029-037-002-M001	029-01610	963,368,520.00	1995-2007	19,267,370.40	12,535,700.00	31,803,070.40
SUB-TOTAL					55,084,029,120.00		1,101,680,582.40	716,772,498.42	1,818,453,080.82
Bldg.			008-08-029-035-003-1001	029-01787	746,201,280.00	2003-2007	14,924,025.60	2,988,349.06	17,912,374.66
Bldg.			008-08-029-035-003-1002	029-01788	642,318,880.00	2003-2007	12,846,377.60	2,749,168.58	15,595,546.18
Bldg.			008-08-029-035-003-1003	029-01789	502,706,800.00	2003-2007	10,054,136.00	2,151,619.36	12,205,755.36
Bldg.			008-08-029-034-003-	029-01791	21,805,380.00	2003-2007	436,107.60	108,531.66	544,639.26
Bldg.			008-08-029-036-007-1001	029-01792	31,167,000.00	2003-2007	623,340.00	212,228.40	835,568.40
Bldg.			008-08-029-036-012-1001	029-01793	1,609,960.00	2003-2007	32,199.20	7,738.20	39,937.40
Bldg.			008-08-029-037-002-1001	029-01794	10,887,633.00	2003-2007	217,752.66	100,139.20	317,891.86
Bldg.			008-08-029-036-006-1001	029-01795	8,705,560.00	2003-2007	174,111.20	38,349.24	212,460.44
Bldg.			008-08-029-036-004-1001	029-01796	682,980.00	2003-2007	13,659.60	3,406.86	17,066.46
Bldg.			008-08-029-036-005-1001	029-01797	278,020.00	2003-2007	5,560.40	1,386.82	6,947.22
Bldg.			008-08-029-034-003-1002	029-01798	247,380.00	2003-2007	4,947.60	1,235.18	6,182.78
Bldg.			008-08-029-036-001-1001	029-01790	1,157,320.00	2003-2007	23,146.40	5,551.50	28,697.90
SUB-TOTAL					1,967,768,193.00		39,355,363.86	8,367,704.06	47,723,067.92
GRAND TOTAL					57,051,797,313.00		1,141,035,946.26	725,140,202.48	1,866,176,148.74

Barangay Payocpoc Sur, Bauang, La Union — **Computations good up to July 31, 2007**

Unless your above stated real property tax obligations are paid within ten (10) days from receipt hereof, or you show proof of payment by presenting your latest tax receipt to the Revenue Division of this Office within the same period of time, the following legal actions shall be taken to enforce collection of taxes, to wit:

1. Serve Warrant of Levy which shall operate with the force of legal execution;
2. Publish notice of delinquency in a newspaper of general circulation; and
3. Sell the property in a public auction sale, and the Title to property will be vested in the purchaser;

It is reminded that you have the right to redeem the auctioned property/ies within one (1) year from the date of sale upon payment to the Municipal Treasurer of the following:

1. Total amount of delinquent tax plus 36% interest due hereon;
2. Expenses of sale including cost of publication and other incidental expenses; and
3. Interest of two percent (2%) per month on the purchased price.

Very truly yours,
(Sgd.) **VIOLETA B. ABENOJA**
ICO - Municipal Treasurer
(Sgd.) **FRANCIS R. E. ESTIGOY**
Provincial Treasurer

(PDI – December 12 & 19, 2007)

Standard Form Number: SF-Good-05
Revised on: July 28, 2004

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Department of Health-Caraga, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/ manufacturers/ distributors/ contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project : PROCUREMENT OF DRUGS & MEDS., MEDICAL LAB. EQUIPMENT & SUPPLIES
Location : DOH-CENTER FOR HEALTH DEVELOPMENT-CARAGA
Brief Description : DRUGS & MEDS., MEDICAL LAB. EQUIPMENT & SUPPLIES
Approved Budget For the Contract : **PhP 12,226,041.33**
Contract Duration :
Delivery Period :

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last (state number of years, minimum 2) with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/ Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	*Schedule*
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	Jan. 5, 2008
2. Pre-bid Conference	Jan. 5, 2008
3. Submission of Letters of Intent and Application for Eligibility (If single-stage bidding is used, delete this activity)	
4. Opening of Bids	Jan. 10, 2008
5. Bid Evaluation	Jan. 22, 2008
6. Post-qualification	Jan. 29, 2008
7. Notice of Award	From Feb. 14-21, 2008

For single-stage bidding:

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of **Two Thousand Pesos Only (PhP2,000.00)** for Drugs & Medicines and **One Thousand Pesos Only (Php1,000.00)** for Medical Laboratory Supplies and Equipment, to the Department of Health – Center for Health Development – Caraga Cashier Section.

The Department of Health – Center for Health Development – Caraga assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) **FLORMINDA B. TEJANO, DPA**
Chief Standards & Licensing Division

(PDI–Dec. 5 & 12, 2007)

Attn: Developers
IMUS, CAVITE
PRIME LOTS AVAILABLE
For Housing/MRB/ School Bet. Imus Inst. & C.T. Elem. School
Access Road Gen. Yengco
14,815m² @ P3,800/m² nego
Call Julius/ First Manda Prop. Network
531-6914 or Cel. 09175226950

CIVIL ENGINEER
Min. 3 years experience - Construction/ Building Industry
Excellent Leadership Skills
Email resumé w/ pic to tatrm7@yahoo.com

LICENSED ARCHITECT
Above-ave. communication/ presentation skills
Knowledgeable in condo/bldg/land developments
Part-time basis only
email resumé w/pic to tatrm7@yahoo.com

07 URVAN ESCAPADE
10 HOURS
P1,800
WITH DRIVER
7878776/7964377
09213497170

BUYING
ROLEX • Patek Philippe • AP
Panerai • IWC • Omega • Cartier
Also Diamonds and unusual watches
09178884040
7269687
email: worldwatch@gmail.com

BUY • SELL • PAWN
ROLEX
SWISS WATCHES • L.V. BAGS
JEWELRY/ DIAMONDS
BEST PRICE
SPOT CASH
3829198
8341572

Zamboanga City Electric Cooperative, Inc.
(ZAMCELCO)
Zamboanga City

INVITATION TO BID

The Zamboanga City Electric Cooperative, Inc. (ZAMCELCO) at Putik, this City per requisite under Board Policies on Pre-Qualifications, and Bids and Awards, invites ALL interested Bidders/ Suppliers to bid for the supply of the following electrical materials/equipment/items, to wit:

No	Quantity	Unit	Item Description
1	25	DRUMS	TRANSFORMER OIL DIALA-A OR EQUIVALENT NOTE: REQUIRED DGA RESULT FOR EQUIVALENT TRANSFORMER OIL AGENCY PRICE: P29,000 per gram

You may secure the Pre-qualification Requirements from the office of the Finance Department, ZAMCELCO Complex in Putik, this city anytime during office hours and submit the same upon completion of all requirements thereof.

Submission of the Pre-qualification Requirements shall not be later than 5:00 pm of December 12, 2007 and no documents appertaining thereto, shall be accepted thereafter.

All applicants will be duly notified as to the results of the pre-qualification eligibility process. Only those who are pre-qualified will be allowed to participate in the bidding. A post-qualification may be conducted accordingly hereafter.

Bidding will be conducted on **December 13, 2007.**

Sealed bid in duplicate copies should be submitted to the Committee on Bids and Awards at the Office of the Finance Department at the above-mentioned address on or before 2:00 p.m. of December 13, 2007. Five percent (5%) Bidder's Bond is required as a matter of policy.

The right to reject any or all bids, to waive any formality therein, or to accept such bid as may be considered advantageous to the coop is hereby reserved as an absolute prerogative of ZAMCELCO.

(Sgd.) **REINERIO R. RAMOS**
General Manager

(PDI--December 12 & 13, 2007)

More Classified Ads on pages

Commission on Human Rights	B10
Department of Labor and Employment – NCR	B10
Department of Labor and Employment – REGION IV	B10

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

This is to inform the public that SMACO Engineering (M) Sdn. Bhd. Representative Office with
3/F PMT Bldg., #32 Dr. Maldo del Rosario St., Kapasigan, Pasig City
is hereby to close its services effective December 1, 2007.
We published this to conform with SEC Rules and Regulation.

The Management

(PDI--Dec. 5, 12 & 19, 2007)

SLR photo exhibit

THE SAMAHAN NG MGA LITRATISTA SA RIZAL (SLR) Camera Club presents its award winning photos in an exhibit called "The Best of SLR" at Sta. Lucia East Grand Mall on Dec. 16-31. The exhibit is presented by Sta Lucia East Grand Mall with major sponsors Innovatronix, Tronix, Loreland, Epson, Crown Asia Properties, Inc., Reed Steel Fabricators, Inc. and III-C Construction Enterprises. Minor sponsors are Veco Paper Corporation, Columbia Digital Sales Company, Oxford Computer Technologies, Swan Bakeshop, JR Multi Business Resources, Inc. and Pepsi.

The photo exhibit is open to the public and features the finest works of the SLR members.

SLR Camera Club is one of the oldest and dynamic camera clubs in the Philippines. Founded in 1993 by Noel Lugod, Vicente Santos and Ramon Castillo, SLR has consistently won in national and international photo contests, including Photographer of the Year awards given by the Federation of Philippine Photographers Foundation (FPPF) to SLR camera club member Gina Meneses.

Republic of the Philippines
GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES
OFFICE OF THE GHQ BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE II
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Armed Forces of the Philippines, through the GHQ Bids and Awards Committee II, invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the Supply and Delivery of NOLCOM Requirements, chargeable against Capital Outlay Fund CY-2007:

Nomenclature/Activity	Approved Budget for the Contract	Date/Time: Pre-Bid Conference	Date/Time: Deadline for Submission/ Opening of Bids	Price of Bid Documents (non-refundable)
MOTOR VEHICLES (PB-GHQBACII-NOLCOM-177-07)	P2,909,000.00	December 17, 2007 9:00 AM (Monday)	January 7, 2008 9:00 AM (Monday)	P3,000.00
MOTORCYCLES (PB-GHQBACII-NOLCOM-178-07)	P326,000.00	Venue: OJ6 Executive Theater, Bulwagang Syquio, Camp General Aguinaldo Quezon City	Venue: OJ6 Executive Theater, Bulwagang Syquio, Camp General Aguinaldo Quezon City	P1,000.00
IT AND OFFICE EQUIPMENT (PB-GHQBACII-NOLCOM-179-07)	P187,408.00			P1,000.00

Office of the GHQ BAC II Secretariat
3/F Bulwagang Syquio, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City
Contact Person: **LCDR PABLO O FUENTEBELLA JR PN**
Tel Nr: 911-6001 Loc 6485 / Cel # 09192534534
Fax Nr: 911-6001 Loc 6485

(PDI - Dec. 12, 2007)

HUDCC to hold AFP Housing Fair 2007

THE HOUSING AND Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC) will hold its 4th Housing Fair on Dec. 17-19 at Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City. Dubbed as AFP Housing Fair 2007, the event is intended to benefit uniformed as well as non-uniformed personnel of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Department of National Defense.

Key Shelter Agencies (KSAs), Government Financial Institutions (GFIs) and at least 20 property developers will take part in the Housing Fair.

"We would like our brave soldiers to have the opportunity to acquire good quality yet affordable shelter for their families who depend on them," Vice President and concurrent HUDCC Chairman Noli "Kabayan" De Castro said.

During the three-day fair, the Pag-IBIG Fund, National Home Mortgage Finance Corporation and other KSAs and the GFIs will sell their foreclosed properties at a very low interest and payable in as long as 30 years.

"We recognize the dire need of our troops to have homes they can call their own. We hope that this housing fair would augment the efforts of the AFP leadership to provide decent housing to its personnel," De Castro said.

To date, the AFP, through its Housing Board, has awarded 13,207 quarters or housing units to its officers, enlisted personnel and civilian employees alike. There are other on-going AFP housing projects nationwide, which could translate to an additional 2,928 housing units when completed.

The opening ceremonies of the event will be graced by the Vice President himself, DND Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr., AFP Chief of Staff Hermogenes Esperon and other government and military officials.

OBITUARIES

The Goze Family

Josefina Mactal Goze, Children and Grandchildren

request prayers for the eternal repose of

Architect Virgilio Ugale Goze, Sr.

who peacefully joined our Creator
on the 3rd of December, 2007 at the age of 74.

His remains lie in state at Lumbang Chapel,
La Funeraria Paz, Sucat, Parañaque.

Inurnment will be on the 14th December 2007, 2:00 p.m. at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina.

"There will always be a special place in our hearts for you. You will always be remembered by people whose lives you have touched. Special moments of love and laughter, of sorrows and tears, of blessings and celebrations will be cherished in our hearts for all eternity."

OBITUARIES

I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.
John 14:6

LA FUNERARIA PAZ, INC.
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NAME OF DECEASED	PLACE OF LYING	INTERMENT/CREMATION DATE & TIME	PLACE
ANTONIO H. ZAPANTA, SR.	Chapel - C	December 15, 2007 8:00 a.m.	Paz Crematory
INVENCION D. SORIO	Alcala, Cagayan	December 14, 2007	Alcala, Cagayan

Dr. Leonardo P. Marcelo

Peacefully joined his Creator
on December 9, 2007 at the age of 74.

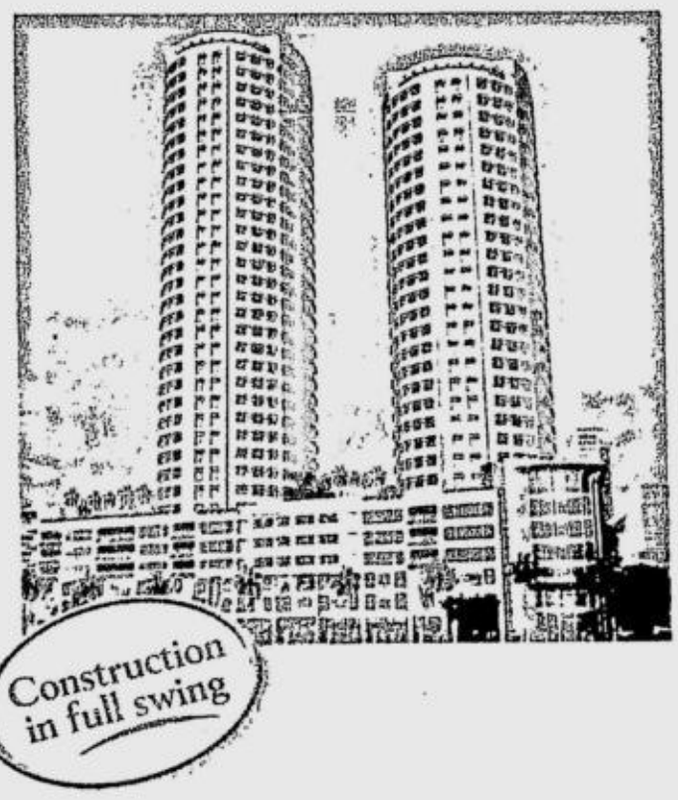
His loving wife, **Tita**
Children:
Melanie and **Popet**,
Jun and **Marivic**,
Melody and **Ronnie**,
Ron;
and Grandchildren request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

Interment will be on Saturday, December 15, 2007 at The Sanctuary San Isidro Memorial Park, Poblacion, San Isidro, Nueva Ecija after the 2:00 p.m. Holy Mass.

CITYPLACE

PHASE 1

The New Face of Chinatown



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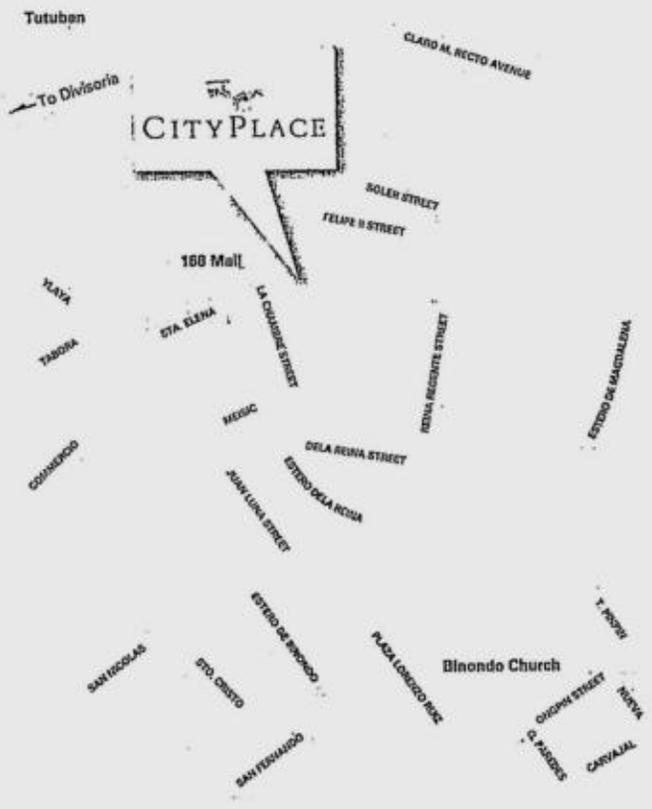
Raise your family in the lap of luxury in the heart of Chinatown. Choose from spacious two- to four-bedroom homes lavished with thoughtful touches. A bathtub in the master's bedroom. Panoramic views of Manila and its breathtaking sunset. An imposing lobby with four high-speed elevators. 24-hour security and privacy.

Relax and rejuvenate yourself in your own playground seven stories above Chinatown. Smell the flowers in a landscaped garden. Stroll along a trellised walkway. Go swimming while the kids have fun in the wading pool or playground. Enjoy a sauna in the gym or unwind in the game room. There's a day care center for kids and a business center for their parents, along with a clubhouse and function rooms.

Say goodbye to those long, stressful trips to the mall. At Cityplace, you're just an elevator ride away from a three-level shopping paradise. A few steps away, the Cityplace Richmonde Hotel is the place to do business with pleasure.

And the best of Chinatown are just a *calesa* ride away—from topnotch Chinese schools to the shops along Ongpin and the offices along Quintin Paredes. Also close by are Divisoria's bargain stores and Manila's University Belt and historical landmarks.

This season, give the gift that lasts—and lasts. Cityplace.



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MOTORING

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Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

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Filipino ingenuity and perseverance shine through once more

Handcrafted to harness the sun, slice the wind

By Tessa R. Salazar

SINAG, the rookie Philippine solar car entry to the recently concluded 3000-km World Solar Challenge held in Australia, placed 11th out of 20 competitors in the race challenge class. That finish seems unremarkable, but if you look at the unique manner in which Sinag was created, one would look at Sinag—and its feat—in a new light.

Sinag's plug and mold were manually done, handcrafted in other words, while competitors used computer numerically controlled machines.

Plug, a terminology used for metal casting, is the shape of the solar car made of polyurethane foam. This forms the basis for making the mold of the car.

Sinag, furthermore, didn't undergo a wind tunnel test, but instead the team just utilized a software to simulate wind aerodynamics.

These small but crucial facts about Sinag's creation were revealed by engineer Rene Fernandez, Team Sinag's overall technical team leader, to INQUIRER Motoring recently.

Competitors used handcrafted shells, but then used CNC machines for the plug and mold," he said.

A bit different

Fernandez added that the process of making the Sinag shell was a bit different, too. It had not been "oven-baked" and there was no vacuum-make compared to competitors."

"We were unique. In our case, the plug, the mold and the final shell were handcrafted," he said.

Fernandez added that due to the unavailability of a wind tunnel, the team was resourceful enough to determine the drag co-efficient using a software.

He likened the handcrafting of the plug and mold as that of a typical *taly-*

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KIA DOES A NADAL!
SCORES A STUNNING UPSET IN THE 2007 CAR OF THE YEAR AWARDS

FOR THE FIRST TIME A KOREAN BRAND, KIA, GARNERED THE MOST NUMBER OF MAJOR AWARDS AT THE 4TH CAR OF THE YEAR (COTY) PHILIPPINES AWARDS PROGRAM WHICH WAS HELD AT THE ROCKWELL TENT IN MAKATI CITY LAST NOVEMBER 15, 2007 BY THE CAR AWARDS GROUP, INC. (CAGI) ORGANIZER OF COTY, UPSETTING OTHER POPULAR JAPANESE, AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN CAR BRANDS.

CATEGORY	WINNER
BASIC SUBCOMPACT AWARD	—KIA PICANTO 1.1L DLX
EXECUTIVE SUB-COMPACT AWARD	—KIA RIO 1.4L SEDAN
COMPACT VAN & MPV AWARD	—KIA CARENS 2.0L CRDi
EXECUTIVE VAN & MPV AWARD	—KIA CARNIVAL 2.9L CRDi (Short Wheelbase)

For the Compact Van and MPV Category

CONTENDERS	WINNER
Kia Carens CRDi	✓
Toyota Avanza	

COMPACT VAN & MPV OF THE YEAR

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KIA CARENS HAS ALSO BEEN AWARDED THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE RATING

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Rafael Nadal
Reigning three-time French Open champion

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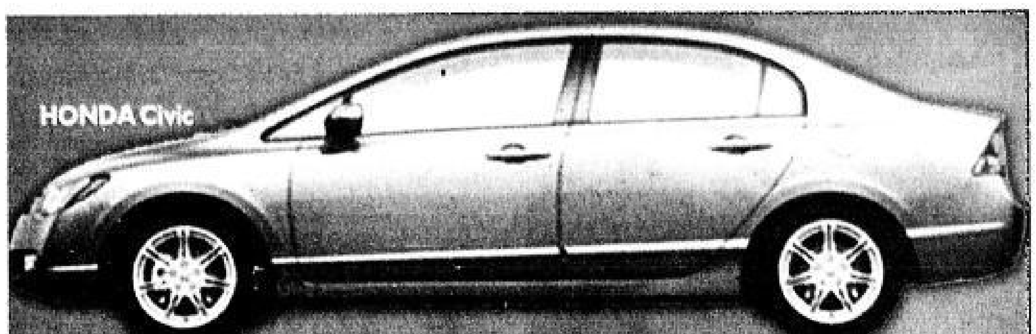


The Best Cars of 2007

(Conclusion)

Andre Palma

CHOOSING A DRIVER'S CAR IS OFTEN problematic. Most of the cars that can really rip up the open road at copious amounts of speed are handicapped by prices that would require 25-year mortgages. We would be so lucky to be in that capacity, wouldn't we?

Thankfully, all is not lost. There are still some cars out there that can fill the budget performance driving requirements of the everyday Filipino motorist. The age of the budget driver's car is upon us, where low prices don't automatically translate into the lack of satisfaction.

A blend of simplicity, fun

The mini car segment is loaded to the brim with automobiles that not only drive well, but also are merciful on the bank balance. The Philippine market is lucky though. In the ranks of these small two-box wonders is an automobile that blends simplicity and punch better than most anything in the market today.

The numbers of this little hatchback [illegible]. Powered by an able 1.5-liter twin-cam common-rail turbo diesel, the resulting engine figures run about 100 bhp and 235 Nm of torque at just 2,000 rpm. Confused by the math? Mere moments in the cockpit of this rocket will clear any sort of bewilderment and make you beg for 4-piston Brembos.

SUBARU Impreza

None other than the Hyundai Getz 1.5 CRDi delivers this pocket-sized punch. Priced around P630,000, one can imagine that most of the money went into the engine. Learn to live with the cheap plastic of the '90s interior and the aches and groans of the budget chassis and realize that the other 'H' brand knows how to build fun cars too.

In the next segment, the beleaguered compact sedan niche, an old familiar name delivers the best bang for buck driving. In 35 years of this model's existence, many of this car's faithful followers thought that Honda lost the plot with the bland and boring seventh generation. Mercifully, the eighth generation FD chassis brings back the Honda Civic that Generation X tuners and enthusiasts went goo-goo over—fun, frugal and loaded with potential.

A surprisingly stiff chassis is what really works for this car alongside a suspension design that is made for decent road holding. While the 2.0-liter version comes with more torque and power, it is the 1.8-liter single cam that delivers the best performance, efficiency and retail price.

If you endure the sneering looks in public, the bare basic 1.8V sans ABS, EDB and airbags, is the one to have. At P777,000, this bare basic car leaves a lot of budget for simple modifications that can really polish this gem in the rough. Look no further than a simple Neova tire upgrade to remind you of what Civics are all about. [illegible]

Real driving monster

[illegible] 2007 [illegible] driving monster. At the lowest rung of the performance automobile is the rally replica. These are turbocharged cars with [illegible] World Rally Championship speed and all-wheel drive handling on public roads. Simply, there is no [illegible] car segment faster for the price. And in the Philippine market, there is no more economical example of a rally replica than the Subaru Impreza WRX.

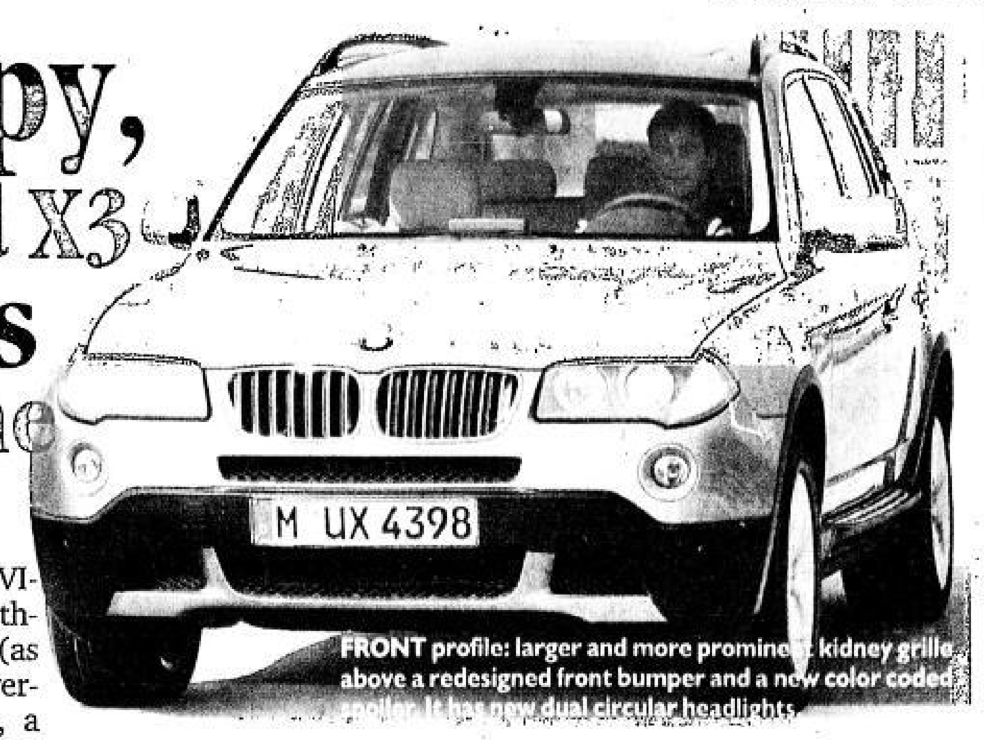
Fine, let's concede that the Impreza STi is closer to the full-blown rally car than the street-going WRX but again, the numbers don't mislead. For around P1,700,000 would-be rally rep owners get 230 bhp and 330 Nm of torque. These are really massive numbers for any car that can be made to prowl everyday Philippine roads. Another point to ponder is that at half a million cheaper than a full-blown STi, this everyday rally car conservatively delivers 80 percent of the experience.

HYUNDAI Getz

So there they are, the cars that have helped define the 2007 motoring year. For the sheer volume of choice, we consumers are better off than ever before. So raise a glass with me to the year about to pass and the one still to come. Here's to an equally exciting 2008 and if my crystal ball is any where near clear as before, we are in for another wild ride. Cheers!

Snappy, freshened X3 features new engine

By Tessa R. Salazar


FRONT profile: larger and more prominent kidney grille above a redesigned front bumper and a new color coded spoiler. It has new dual circular headlights.

BMW'S SPORTS ACTIVITY vehicle with the "athletic Asian physique" (as we call the X5's mini-me version) sports a new engine, a fresh interior and exterior design as well as some new high-tech stuff.

The X3 magic has not yet worn out, as it retains the nimble handling, admirable steering and braking with the touch of that stiff ride.

The new X3 2.5Si makes its debut with its in-line six-cylinder engine that features a lightweight composite magnesium/aluminum crankcase. It weighs just 165 kg and features variable Valvetronic valve control.

Power

The 2.5Si's power can be tapped through a six-speed automatic transmission that features the latest in converter technology and particularly powerful software standard (reduced reaction and gearshift times by up to 50 percent compared to a conventional A/T system, according to experts).

For fuel-conscious SAV enthusiasts, try testing the X32.0d that features the four-cylinder power unit with the latest generation common-rail direct injection.

The specs indicate that it has a max output of 150 hp, with torque at 330 Nm all the way from 2,000 to 2,500 rpm.

The acceleration (according to the manufacturer's spec) is at 10.2 seconds (0 to 100 kph), with a top speed of 198 kph.

The 2.5Si, on the other hand registers 218 hp (26 hp more than the previous X3 2.5Si) and peak torque of 250 Nm. Acceleration from 0 to 100 kph is at 8.5 seconds with a top speed rated at 210 kph. Average fuel consumption in the EU cycle is a surprising 10.1 km/liter.

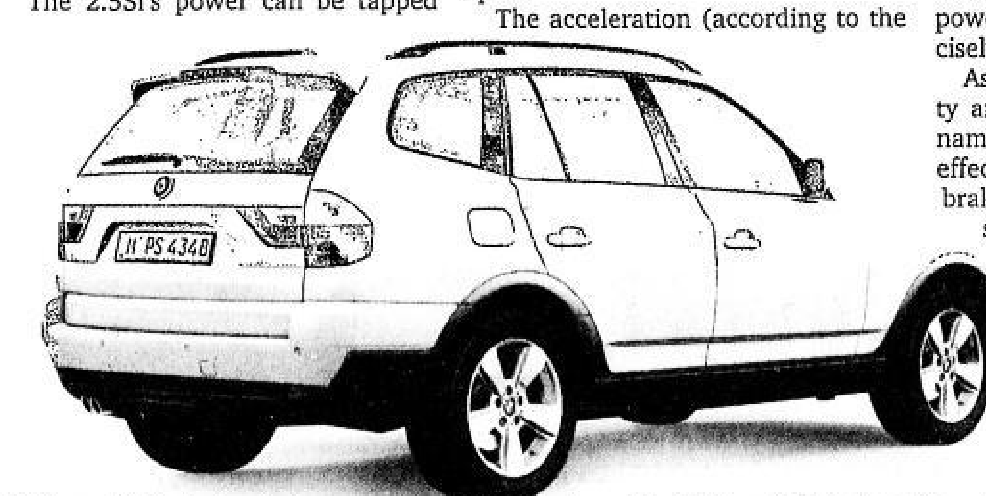
Agility

The X3 credits its agility to BMW's permanent intelligent xDrive all-wheel-drive system, which feeds the power of the engine quickly and precisely to where it can be used best.

Aside from ensuring driving stability and traction, its new DSC or dynamic stability control optimizes the effect of the brakes by increasing brake pressure as required in response to even the slightest touch.

The DSC comprises such crucial vehicle systems as the anti lock brakes, automatic stability control, and the hill descent control.

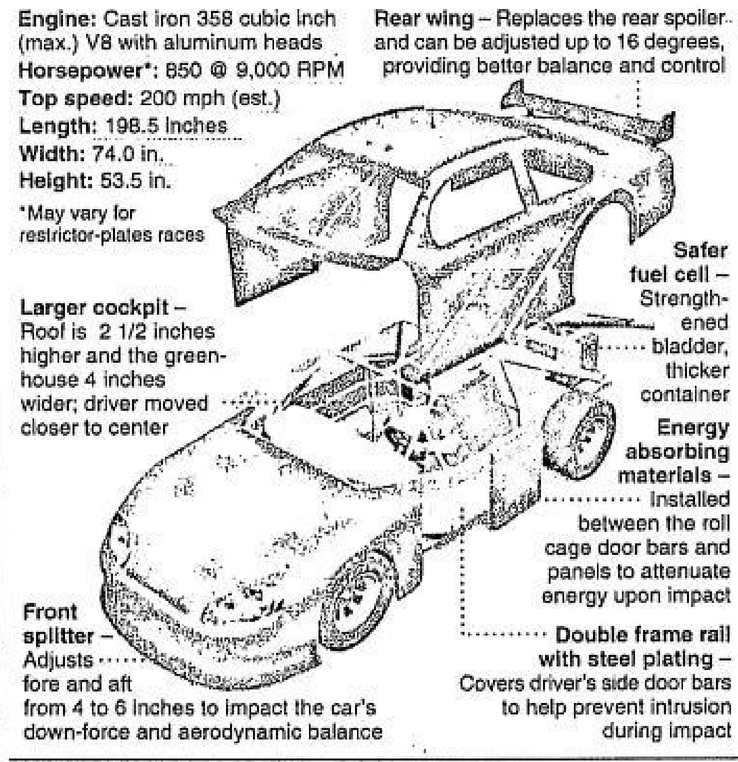
The dynamic brake control also automatically maximizes brake pressure in an emergency when the driver is required to apply the brakes all out.


NEW rear light clusters feature rods of LED lights that provide striking night design. The styling of rear bodywork has been changed with color coded panels extending lower down the bodywork.

Ready to roll

After seven years of planning and testing, NASCAR's Car of Tomorrow debuts Sunday at Bristol Motor Speedway in the Food City 500, the first of 16 races where teams will be required to use it this season.

Engine: Cast iron 358 cubic inch (max.) V8 with aluminum heads
Horsepower*: 850 @ 9,000 RPM
Top speed: 200 mph (est.)
Length: 198.5 inches
Width: 74.0 in.
Height: 53.5 in.
*May vary for restrictor-plates races



SOURCE: NASCAR — Ed DeGasero, Merrill Sherman • AP

Handcrafted

er (neighborhood machine shop) that repaired car bodies using *mano-mano* methods.

"You really have to admire such talent," Fernandez quipped.

Filipinos among the best

During the INQUIRER Motoring's past interviews with car restorers, it has been noted that Filipinos were among the world's best in terms of workmanship and craftsmanship, particularly when working with rare car parts. With some rare or vintage cars needing some missing parts, Filipino craftsmen would copy what is left and transform it into a mold.

Team Sinag researched and used computer models to come up with an aerodynamic design. Sinag has a drag coefficient of 0.1, which allows it to move forward using less energy.

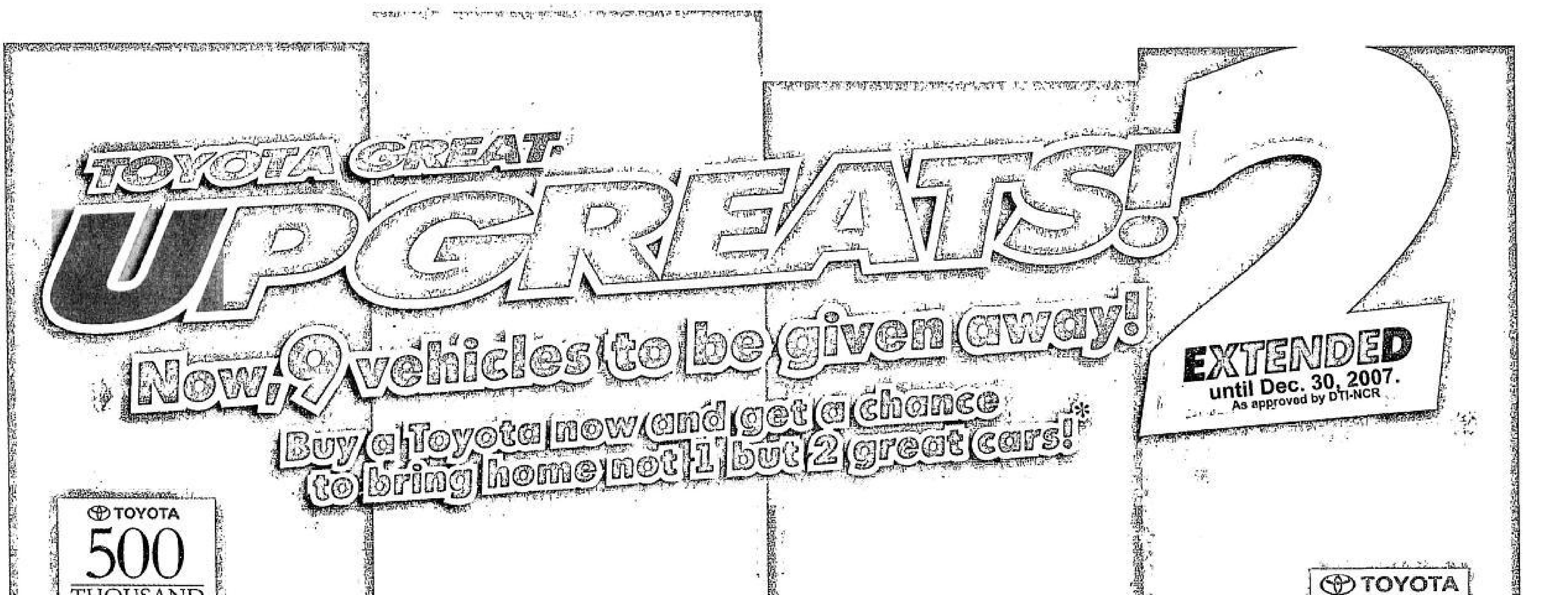
Its steering system consists of surplus motorbike front forks and wheels, th[illegible] found on ordinary[illegible]

The monocrys[illegible] solar cells were [illegible] Philippines by Su[illegible] Laguna facility. [illegible] square-meter top [illegible] ered with these [illegible] smooth black surf[illegible] absorb more of th[illegible]

Team's ingenui[ty]

In a separate [illegible] Alvin Culaba, pre[illegible] Philippine Amer[illegible] tion of Scientists a[illegible] cited the Sinag t[illegible] ity.

"We don't have [illegible] wind tunnel to st[illegible] dynamics of the [illegible] meant we are not [illegible] and people wh[illegible] brains. If we were [illegible] same opportuniti[illegible] laboratories and e[illegible] would be able t[illegible] world's best."



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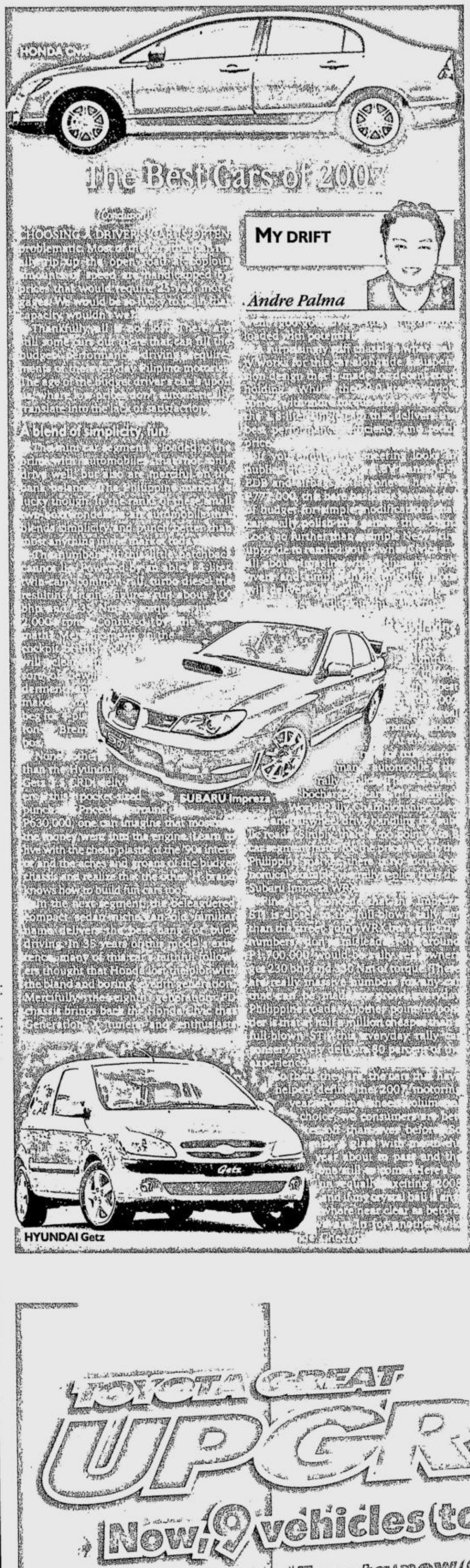

Snappy, freshened X3 features new engine

By Tessa R. Salazar

FRONT profile: larger and more prominent kidney grille above a redesigned front bumper and a new color coded dual circular headlights

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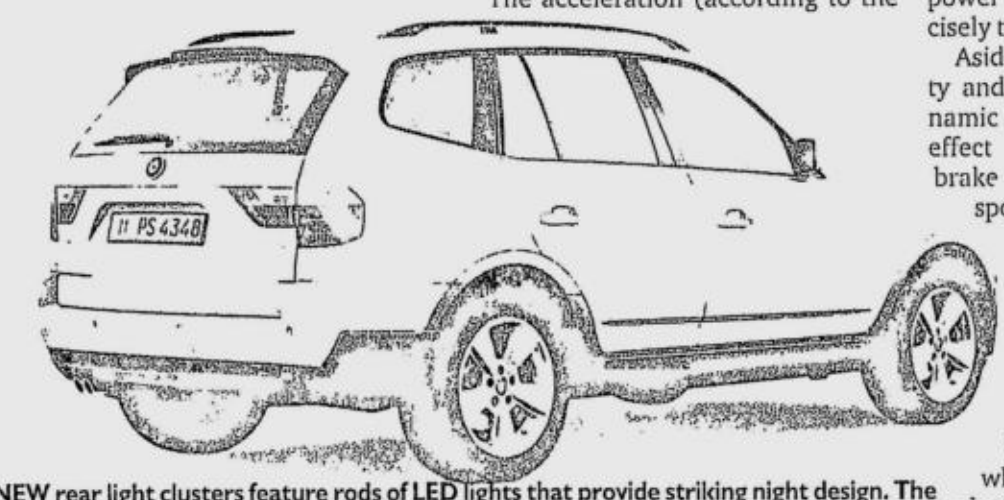
The dynamic brake control also automatically maximizes brake pressure in an emergency when the driver is required to apply the brakes all out.



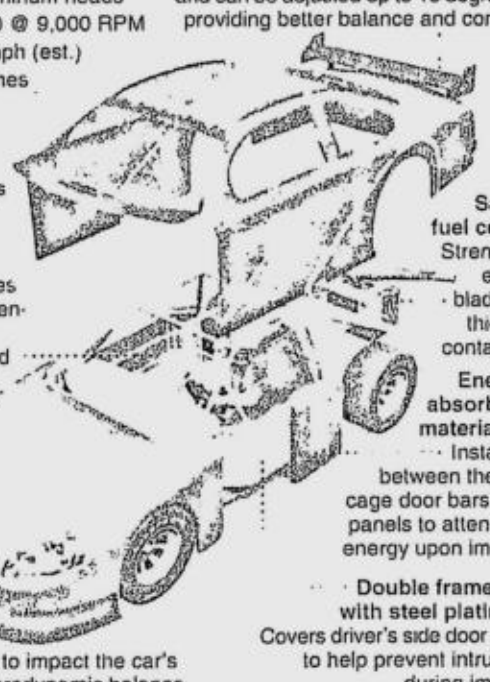
NEW rear light clusters feature rods of LED lights that provide striking night design. The styling of rear bodywork has been changed with color coded panels extending lower down the bodywork.

Ready roll

After seven years of planning and testing, NASCAR's Car of Tomorrow debuts Sunday at Bristol Motor Speedway in the Food City 500, the first of 16 races where teams will be required to use it this season.

Engine: Cast iron 358 cubic inch (max.) V8 with aluminum heads
Horsepower*: 850 @ 9,000 RPM
Top speed: 200 mph (est.)
Length: 198.5 inches
Width: 74.0 in.
Height: 53.5 in.
*May vary for restrictor-plates races

Rear wing – Replaces the rear spoiler and can be adjusted up to 16 degrees, providing better balance and control



Larger cockpit - Roof is 2 1/2 inches higher and the greenhouse 4 inches wider; driver moved closer to center

Safer fuel cell - Strengthened bladder thicker container

Energy absorbing materials – Installed between the roll cage door bars and panels to attenuate energy upon impact

Front splitter – Adjusts fore and aft from 4 to 6 inches to impact the car's down-force and aerodynamic balance

Double frame rail with steel plating - Covers driver's side door bars to help prevent intrusion during impact

SOURCE: NASCAR

Ed DeGasero, Merrill Sherman • AP

Handcrafted

er (neighborhood machine shop) that repaired car bodies using *mano-mano* methods.

"You really have to admire such talent," Fernandez quipped.

Filipinos among the best

During the INQUIRER Motoring's past interviews with car restorers, it has been noted that Filipinos were among the world's best in terms of workmanship and craftsmanship, particularly when working with rare car parts. With some rare or vintage cars needing some missing parts, Filipino craftsmen would copy what is left and transform it into a mold.

Team Sinag researched and used computer models to come up with an aerodynamic design. Sinag has a drag coefficient of 0.1, which allows it to move forward using less energy.

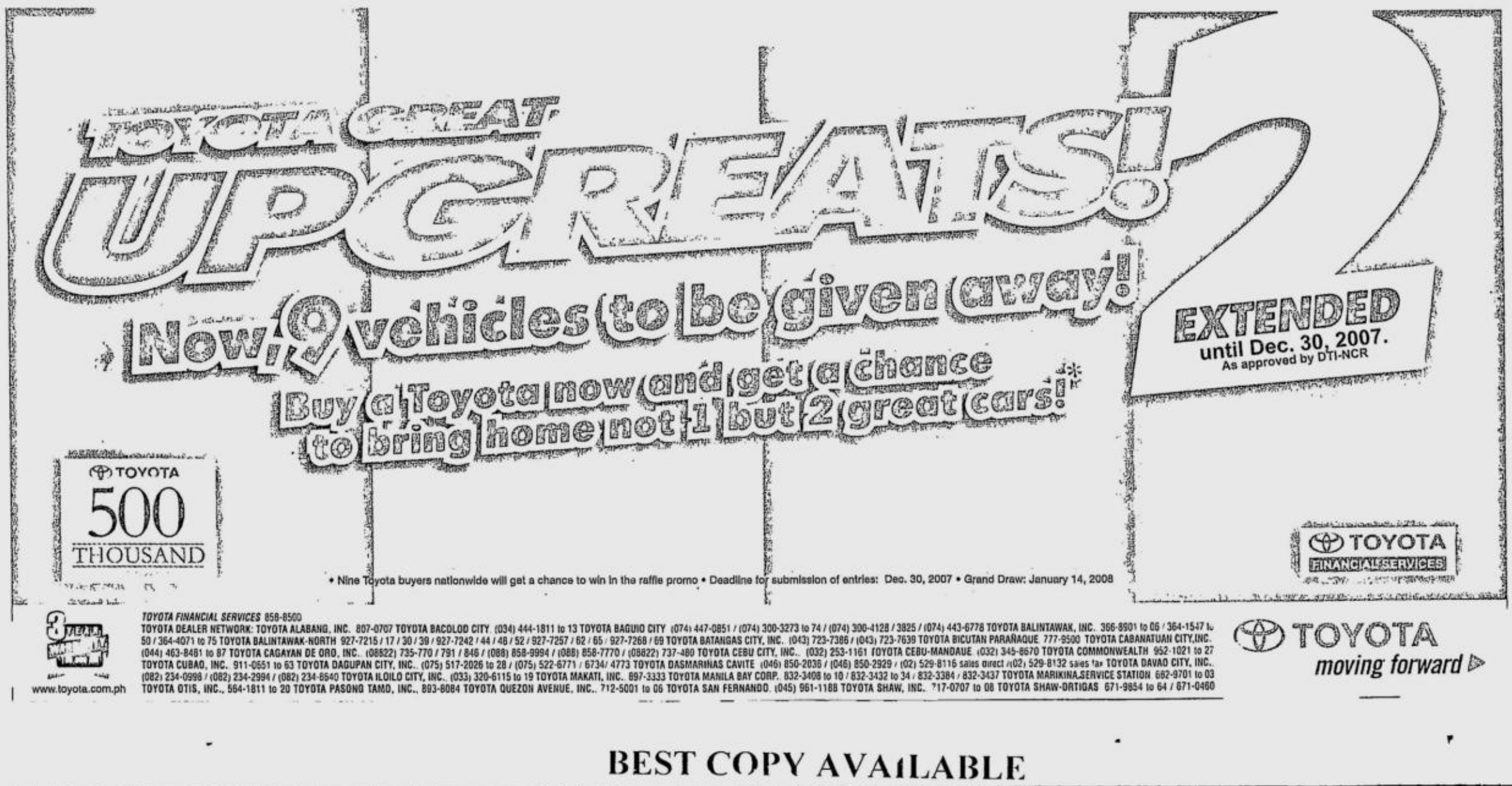
Its steering system consists of surplus motorbike front forks and wheels, th found on ordinar

The monocrys solar cells were Philippines by Su Laguna facility. square-meter top ered with thes smooth black sur absorb more of th

Team's ingenui

In a separate Alvin Culaba, pr Philippine Amer tion of Scientists cited the Sinag ity.

"We don't have wind tunnel to s dynamics of the meant we are no and people wh brains. If we were same opportuni laboratories and would be able world's best."



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The FIA promotes greener motoring

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

RACING IS NOT THE ONLY CONCERN of the Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) although it makes and implements rules for motor sports worldwide including Formula One, the World Rally Championship, Le Mans, the Dakar Rally and the Race of Champions.

The FIA is also concerned about the clamor for dramatic action to stop global warming which is the subject of the ongoing Climate Change Conference in Bali attended by delegates from nearly 190 nations. Although automobiles today are cleaner and more fuel-efficient as a result of improvements in technology and fuels that reduce both toxic emissions and the quantity of carbon dioxide emitted per vehicle, the FIA knows that the development and deployment of cleaner and more fuel-efficient technologies is the key to future mobility as demand for automobile use rises worldwide.

Target

Last October, the FIA general assembly tackled the global problem of climate change and called on the United Nations to adopt the first-ever worldwide target for carbon dioxide emissions in passenger cars, 140 g/km as part of a new international framework for greener motoring. This could serve as an international target that all can aspire to, the FIA noted, adding that the benchmark would provide a way of measuring progress of the entire automotive fleet worldwide.

Although only about 10 percent of total greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) are attributable to road transport, this level is gradually increasing in all regions of the world. Currently there are 600 million motor vehicles in use around the world and this number is forecast to double by 2020 with the fastest growth of motorization occurring in emerging economies such as BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China).

While emission control technologies such as the catalyst and filters are reducing the automobile's impact on ambient air quality, the challenge remains to encourage global application of these technologies, especially in newly motorizing countries where urban air pollution adversely affects public health.

Responsible mobility

On the other hand, although the FIA and its member clubs have for many years supported responsible mobility and promoted cleaner, less carbon-intensive and more fuel-efficient motoring, the FIA contends that policies and measures to improve air quality, mitigate climate change and promote fuel economy must always be cost-effective and shared by all emission sources. It would be both unfair and ineffective to concentrate policy action on a single sector such as road transport while ignoring other sources of toxic or GHG emissions such as livestock, which is estimated to account for 18 percent of total GHG emissions measured in carbon dioxide equivalent.

To achieve further progress in improving air quality and promoting fuel economy, action is required in three main areas:

1. Promoting new vehicle, fuel and component technologies;
2. Improving road network design and management;
3. Incentives and information to promote greener automotive technologies, driving and mobility choices by the consumer.

Cost-effective

Regarding the first main area, the FIA general assembly recommended that industry, in partnership with government, continue to invest in cost-effective low carbon and cleaner automotive technologies across a range of vehicle characteristics, including aerodynamics, combustion efficiency, drive trains, driver information devices, energy recovery and hybrids, rolling resistance and weight.

Mutually supportive product development in improved quality and alternative fuels is required including natural gas and bio-fuels, the FIA said, provided that the latter can become more cost-effective and will not harm biodiversity and global food production. "As these technology innovations come to market, governments should adopt policies that encourage the use of a wider mix of power and fuel systems to enhance consumer choice and gradually reduce excessive dependence on fossil fuels," the FIA declared.

In the third main area, the FIA general assembly recommended that governments work together with automobile clubs to support a comprehensive program of consumer information encouraging responsible mobility and the purchase of clean, less carbon-intensive vehicles, fuels and components which will not just benefit the environment but also reduce the cost of motoring. To provide accurate and independent information about the environmental performance of automotive-related products, the FIA proposes Eco-labeling and Eco-testing.

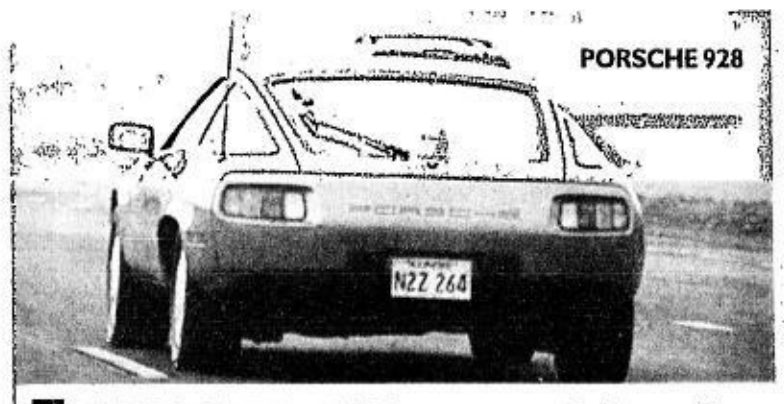
Eco-driving

The FIA also recommends the development of training programs to encourage fuel-efficient driving and the integration of such courses into driver licensing and safety training schemes. "Eco-driving" can be supported by the intro of on-board driver info devices such as econometers and gear shift indicators to aid the driver in sustaining more fuel-efficient behavior and thereby reduce motoring costs.

Corollary to all these, FIA member clubs are now tasked to promote a "Make Cars Green" awareness campaign and a 10-point Guide for Greener Motoring. As the only FIA member club in this country, the Automobile Association Philippines (AAP) assumes a new challenge.

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: Diplomacy is the art of letting someone else get your way.



TRANSPORT TRIVIA — By Emman Cena

Porsche's timeless superstar

ASIDE THE MUCH DROOLING over actor Tom Cruise, this car has drawn ohlalas in the 1983 Hollywood film "Risky Business." But the stardom hasn't dwindled yet for the superstar Porsche 928 as it is going to appear in another film soon.

This 1979 Porsche, dubbed as the shark or land shark-like appearance and its ability to gobble up stretches of road in no time, was the car that Cruise drove in the movie. Porsche enthusiasts have called this the most famous Porsche 928 in the world.

Reports say that a certain Lewis Johnsen of Denver now owns the famous car. Johnsen is said to be producing a documentary film about it and targeting entry slot in the Sundance Film Festival in 2008. His film "Quest for RB928" documents his journey to find and acquire the long lost movie car from the hit '80s movie.

According to reviews, the Porche 928 is a grand tourer (GT) automobile, a high-performance vehicle designed for comfortable long distance driving, fully laden with a powerful motor and the best in luxury features.

It was designed to fly down motorways for hours in excess of 100 mph, and was equally adept on curves and twisty mountain roads. Porsche AG of Germany made the 928 from 1978 to 1995, and it was considered to be one of their most expensive offerings.

In the late '80s it was the fastest production road car in the world, recording 172 mph on the salt flats in Utah in 1986 using an early 928 S4. Porsche's marketing slogan became "It's about as fast as you can go without having to eat airline food."

The exotic supercar is said to several other innovations such as the "Weissach Axle," an early all-wheel steering system that provides passive rear-wheel steering in certain off-throttle cornering situations.

The 928 continued to evolve through the years. Its final version came in 1992 and 1995. During that time it was the most expensive car, costing $100,000.

But the pricey 928 comes with a handful of surprises: it had the high performance, glamor and reputation that truly made it a superstar automobile around the world. It continues to have a huge fan base and can outperform current manufacturer's sport and grand-touring models. It is currently on exhibit at the Forney Museum of Transportation in Denver, Colorado.

Reference: http://forney-museum.org

to harness . . .

From page B2-I

same type tricycles.
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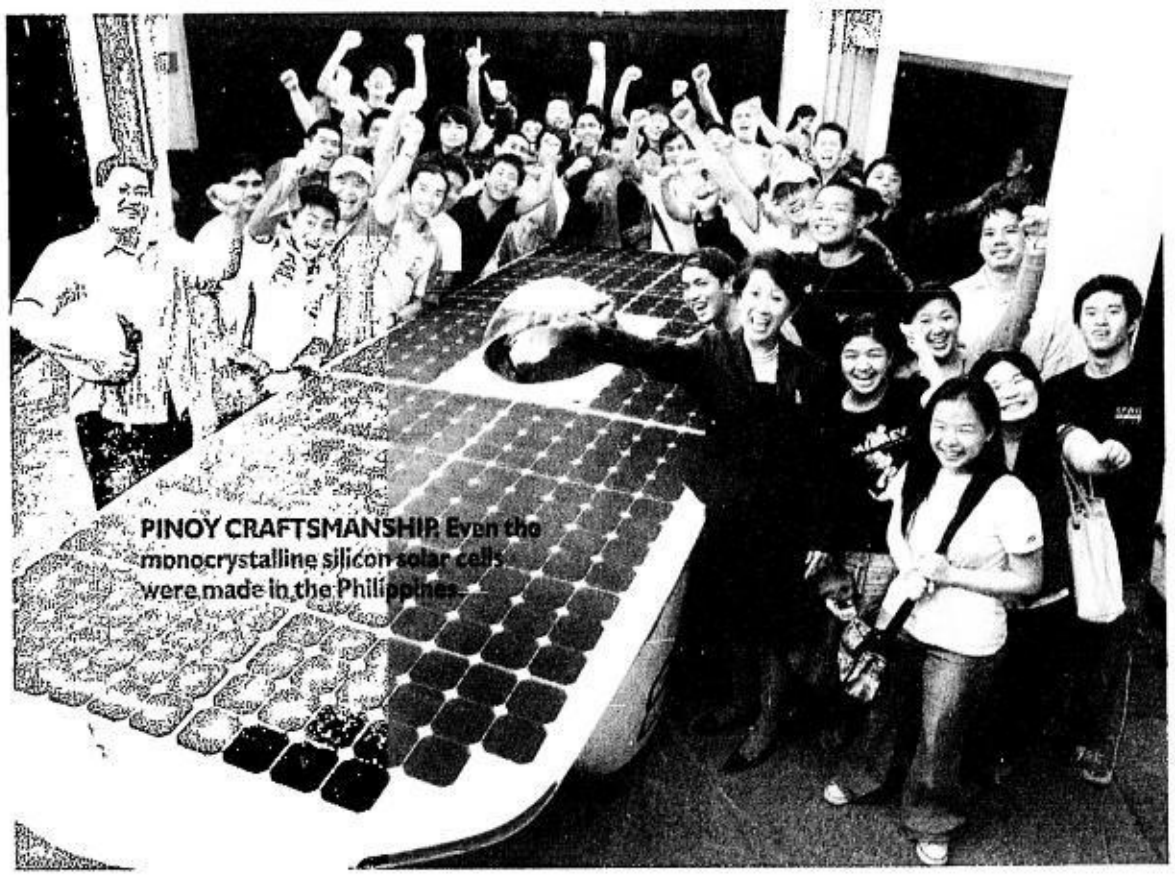

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See flyers for details. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 5640 Series of 2007.
TOYOTA moving forward

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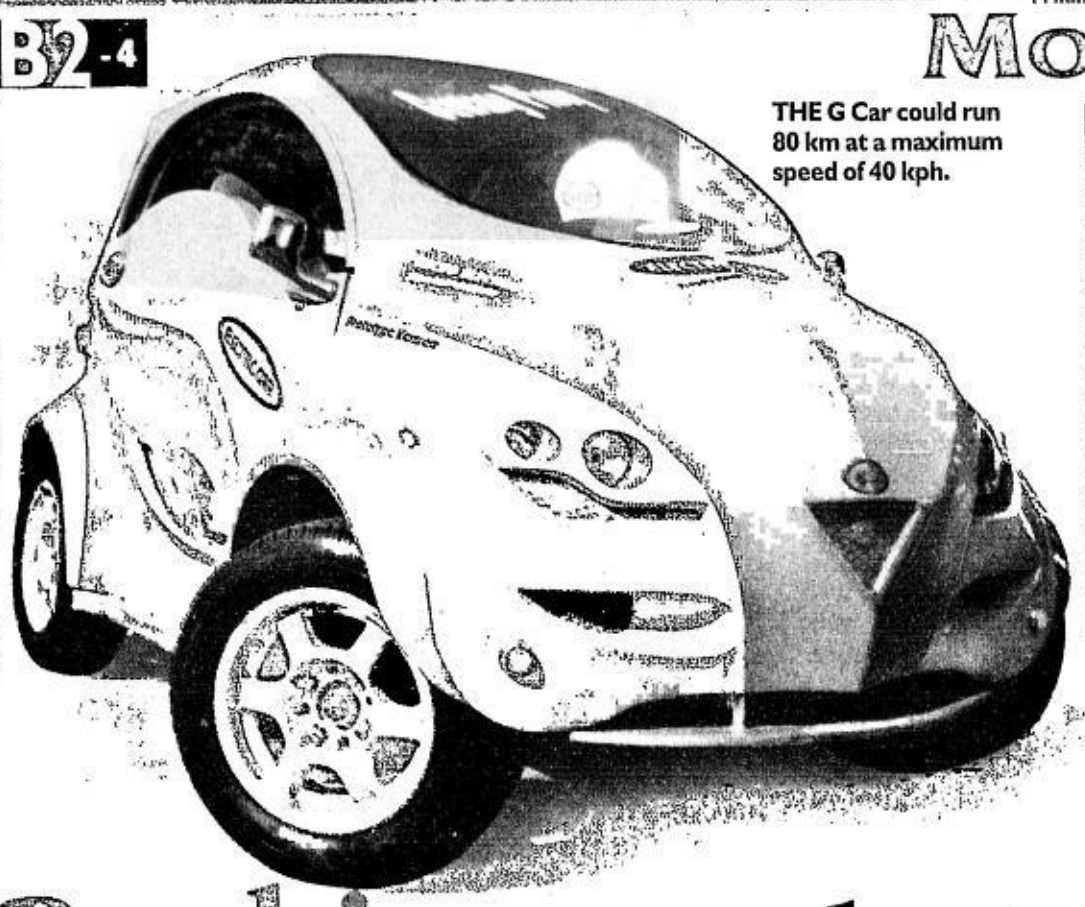
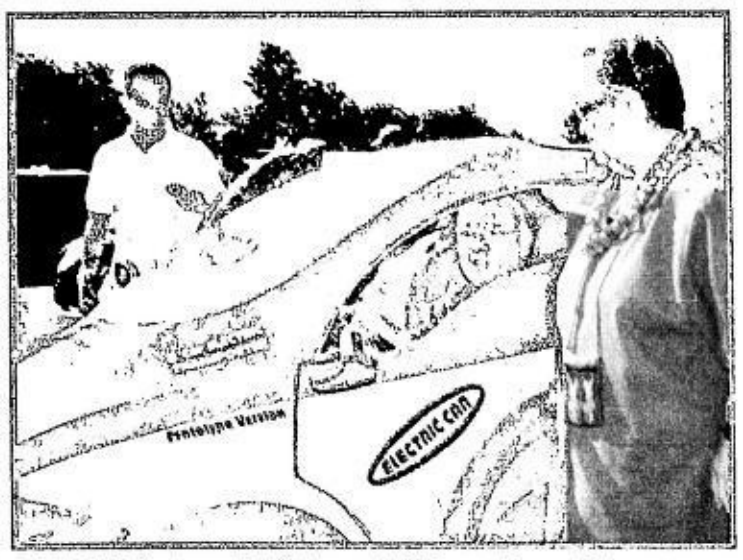


THE G Car could run 80 km at a maximum speed of 40 kph.



CARORO (extreme left) shows his G Car to Mayor Belmonte (seated inside) and Planas.

Banking on electricity to power cars

Text and photos by Charles E. Buban

OF ALL ALTERNATIVES to oil for powering transportation, electricity holds the greatest promise. So argues inventor, engineer Gerry Caroro, who recently unveiled his own version of an electric powered car.

Called the G Car, Caroro's creation is classified as "pure electric car," that is, it only runs on battery and needs a charger to replenish its power.

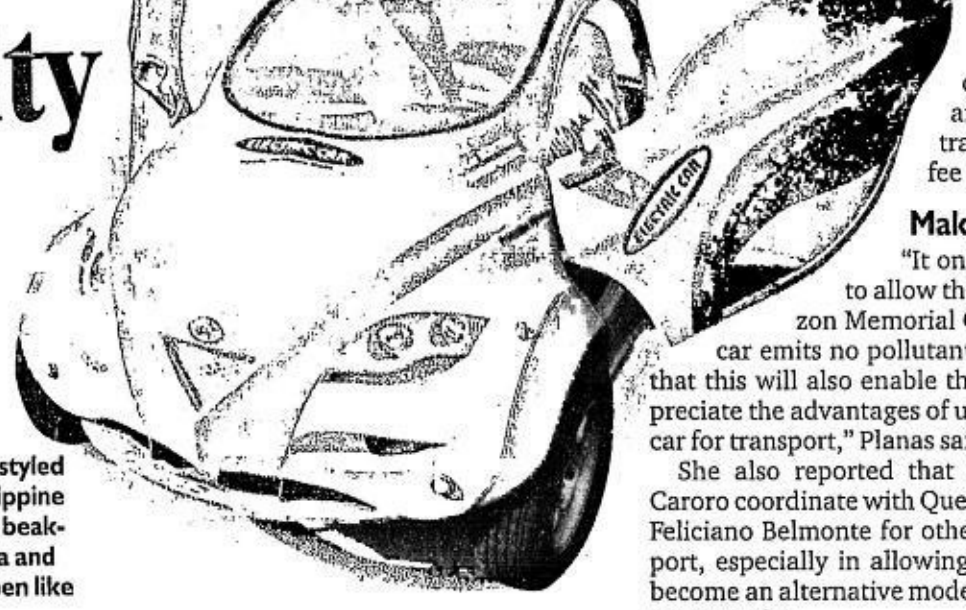
"The G Car represents a cleaner way to move around the city. While this type of mobility is mostly found inside golf courses and sometimes its posh residential communities, I don't see why it can't be used in public roads," Caroro said.

To make his P280,000 project suitable for public roads, he used tubular space frame as well as fiberglass in the body to make it safe for the occupants during impacts.

"The G Car's design is influenced by the Philippine Eagle, hence the beak-shaped front facia and doors that open up like wings. But more than just a design, the body will help the G Cars occupants during impacts.

Safety

Indeed, safety is a paramount concern so aside from this protective shell, the G Car also provides the usual safety features of regular cars like a disc (front) and drum (rear) brakes," Caroro explained, adding that driving the car is so easy as one only has to steer as well as use the accelerator and brakes.



THE G Car is styled after the Philippine eagle with its beak-like front facia and doors that open like wings.

OTHER G Car prototypes created by Caroro

No more gear shifting and don't worry about wet road conditions or the rain as the car is safe enough to protect the occupants from electric shocks.

The G Car could run 80 kilometers from a full charge (that takes 8 hours when plugged on a standard electrical socket) although it could be driven for 40 km using a fast charger (that 4 hours).

"It seats two adults and two children and at a maximum speed of 40 kph, I believe the G Car is perfect for Metro Manila's stop-and-go traffic as well as short commute in the city, especially that the car does not consume electricity while idling or parking," Caroro explained.

Worth of electricity

Caroro said he used a 48-volt deep cycle battery. "The owner only has to spent P40 to P60 worth of electricity in order to fully charge the battery."

Caroro lamented that the G Car was developed five years ago but had a tough time getting supporters.

"Finally, the Quezon City Parks Development Foundation Inc. was generous enough to support us in our mission to make the public more aware of electric cars and how could this type of vehicle solve our worsening air pollution," Caroro said.

Charito Planas, president of the foundation, said the tie-up with Caroro will allow park goers of the Quezon Memorial Circle to drive the G Car around the central plaza for a fee (P30).

Makes sense

"It only makes sense to allow the G Car in Quezon Memorial Circle since the car emits no pollutant in the air and that this will also enable the public to appreciate the advantages of using an electric car for transport," Planas said.

She also reported that she is helping Caroro coordinate with Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte for other possible support, especially in allowing the vehicle to become an alternative mode of transport in Quezon City.

"The mayor is very interested because aside from running purely on battery, the G Car could be configured to use solar energy. Quezon City could lead the others in the use of clean and renewable source of energy for transport," Caroro said.

Aside from the four-seater G Car, Caroro also said he has allowed the Quezon Memorial Circle goers to drive his other prototypes.

"This will not only let the people know that we now have the capacity to build our own brand of electric car but that it can be practically driven even on the road," Caroro said.

LIFESTYLE 360°

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to be you! to be you! to be you!

What did you do to change the World in 2007?

People like measuring the year that's about to pass in different ways: going back to the biggest **headlines,** singling out the noisiest **newsmakers,** counting the **new things** they've bought, the **places** they've visited, the **experiences** that have rocked them to the core. We know because we do that, too.

But this time, we want people to **look back** at 2007 in a different way.

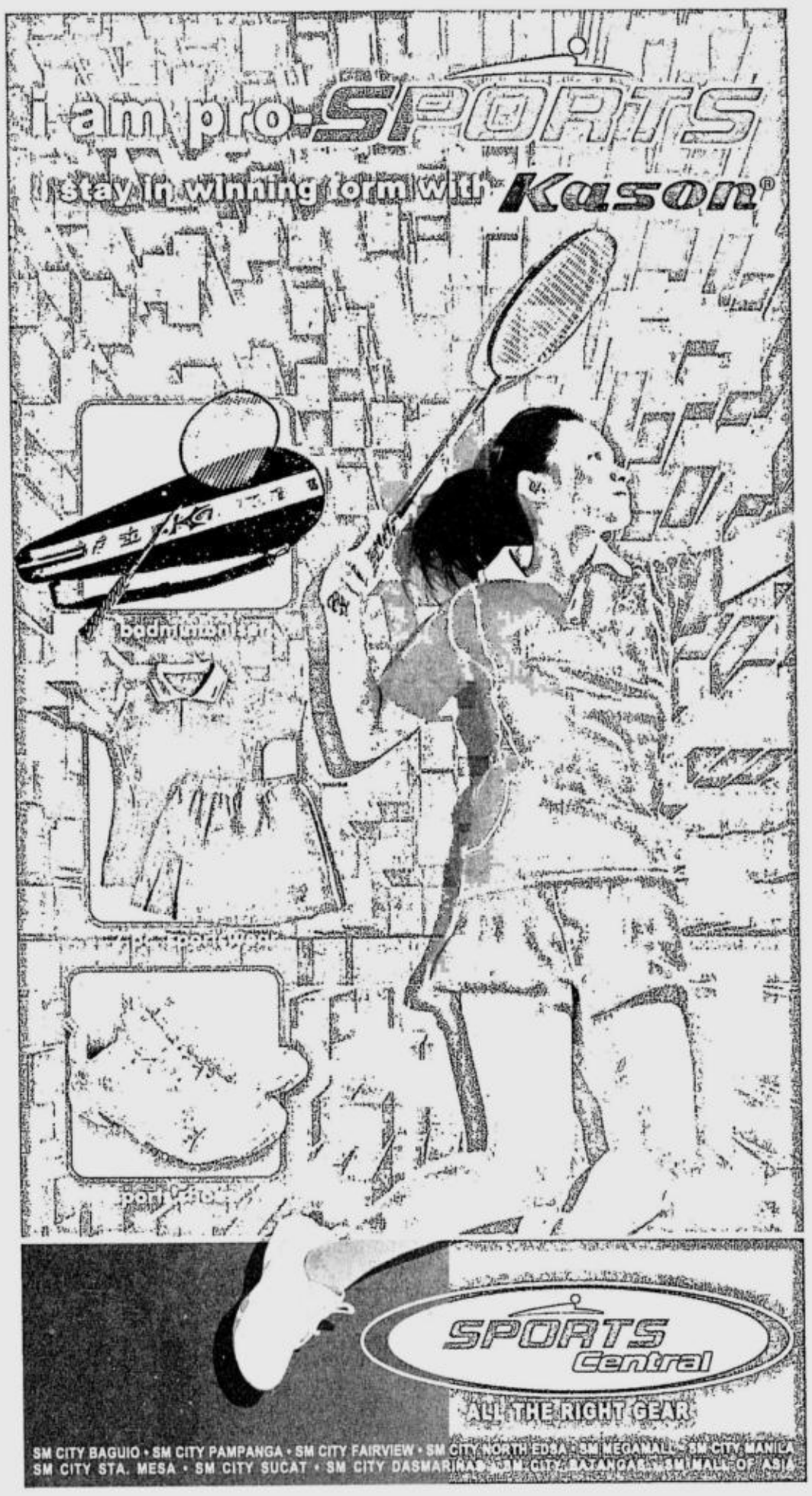
We want to measure the **past year** with good deeds—in hopes of **encouraging** more people to make a **difference** next year.

You've had a little over **11 months.**

What did you do with all that time?

We asked people, what did you do to change the world in 2007?

The **essays and pictures** in the next pages are their answers.



"All you want for Christmas, we deliver with Sun 24/7."

"With over 650 branches nationwide, LBC found a reliable, cost-efficient and convenient communications partner in Sun."

Chris Guidotti, VP Procurement

LBC –"Ang Hari ng Padala", gets even busier this Christmas season to make sure higher volumes of deliveries are made on time, all the time. With over 650 branches nationwide, and offices in Asia, the US and Canada, LBC gets ready to meet the Pinoy holiday rush with its fast-moving and cut-rate delivery service—with a lot of help coming from its communications partner, Sun Cellular.

"Sun provides reliable and on-spot communication service that is essential to our operations, while helping us keep our costs significantly down," says Chris. It is so cost effective that LBC has connected all its branches with Sun's 24/7 Call & Text Unlimited service. As a result, coordination between the head office and the branches is so much faster and clearer especially since calls can be made to all branches without them worrying about the costs.

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Text and photos by Mon Guinto
Contributor

I LOVE TAKING PICTURES.

Ever since my dad handed me his Kodak Pocket Instamatic 60 when I was in fourth grade, I've relished the idea of capturing significant moments, places, and people and freezing them on photo paper.

My favorite subjects are people, and each photo I take and revisit brings back memories and stories connected with these people. A few of these memories are sad, but most of them are pleasant. I am happiest when I'm with my camera, just soaking everything in, an active participant and quiet observer at the same time.

In May of this year, a photography group I am active with, LomoManila, was invited to an event in Amoranto Stadium called "Malinis, Please," which was a concert-slash-arts-fair set up to promote clean and honest elections. I participated and went about as I would any other event. I took photos and tried to capture the energy of that moment.

But that evening also allowed me to reconnect with an old friend of mine: Gang Badoy, one of the prime movers of Rock Ed (which organized the event) and this kicked off my current dalliance with Rock Ed.

Copping out

Volunteerism is not new to me. Ever since I can remember, my family has been active when it came to providing support and help to those who need them. In 1986, when Cardinal Sin called on the citizenry to rush to Camps Aguinaldo and Crame to help protect then General Ramos and Defense Secretary Enrile, we (as in everyone, save for our terrier, Prince) were among the first ones to go.

During high school, we tutored children from nearby Pura V. Kalaw Elementary School and held annual newspaper/book/bottle drives to help raise funds. In college, we had fundraisers, trips to Kythe, missions to Pinatubo, and many more. Fueled by idealism and a lot of hormones, I really thought that these acts would help change the world.

These days, I enjoy taking pictures more, comfortable in the thought that my passion for photographs has become more than just self-expression

PRISON PORTRAITS. The author spent time taking pictures of prisoners at the New Bilibid Prison and mailing the photos to their families.

But as I started working and my own family grew, priorities shifted. Changing the world gave way to changing the diapers. Paying it forward took a back seat to paying the bills.

Each time someone would ask me to help out in one cause or another, my first instinct was to bring out my billfold and say, "I'm not sure if I can help out. Would some money do?" I would then proceed to hand that person some money, relieved that I had somehow made a contribution. In reality, it was a cop-out.

Well, at least until Rock Ed came and rocked my world.

After "Malinis, Please" in May, LomoManila once again was invited to participate and document RockEd's Independence Day activities in June, and this was where I saw the energy and spirit of volunteerism in its purest form—students, artists, educators, and normal shmoes (like me) working together to try to awaken the nation with a simple idea: that every person in his or her own way can make this country a better place.

This idea made me realize that I need not do anything particularly different to make a difference. I could make my contribution doing what I love most: picture-taking.

Snapshots of jail life

Recently, I was fortunate enough to be invited by Gang to visit the New Bilibid Prison in Muntinlupa as part of Rock Ed's "Rock The Rehas." My role was once more to help document the event as well as capture snippets of life in jail. I immediately recognized that this was a rare opportunity and jumped at the chance of going. I wanted to see the inside of Muntinlupa and knew cameras were normally not allowed inside.

After spending a few minutes inside and conversing with some of the prison gang leaders, Gang and the team of photographers who tagged along came up with an idea that I dubbed "The Prisoner Portrait Project," where portraits of inmates would be taken with the intention of sending these to their loved ones.

Most of these guys have no way of contacting their friends and relatives, and this activity was envisioned as a way to help prisoners let the outside world know that they are alive and well.

It was during these portrait sessions that I got to meet and talk to a lot of the inmates. Aside from getting their names and the contact details of their loved ones, I'd normally ask them what they were in for and how it was like inside.

Though their cases and sentences varied—life imprisonment for rape, double-life for murder, 10 years for homicide—their demeanor was almost always the same: polite, with a hint of humor. I noticed that a lot of them did not smile and that most of them had a very hard time looking at the camera. I imagine that avoiding eye contact was one way of avoiding trouble inside Munti.

To date, I have mailed out 95 portraits to places as near as BF Homes in Parañaque (a stone's throw away from where I live) and as far away as Lanao. I can only imagine the reaction of the recipients of the photos.

These days, I enjoy taking pictures more, comfortable in the thought that my passion for photographs has become more than just self-expression. I now realize that my values and visual pursuits intersect, and that changing the world sometimes entails just changing a roll of film.

MAKE a stand at the Sunday Silence II event.

The sound of silence

By Gang Badoy
Contributor

LAST MONTH, 164 PRIVATE citizens of the Philippines watched the sunset in silence. All of them wore a shade of blue. No placards, no megaphones, no poetry, no songs.

Born out of one conversation I had with veteran actor Ronnie Lazaro, this gathering came about when we started talking about politics and the national situation over beer at someone's birthday party.

There were too many issues to work for, to stand against, to speak out on that the people in that party decided to hold a rally. So they sent out text messages to friends that said, "*Kung wala ka nang masabi sa mga nangyayari, manood ka ng* sunset *kasama ng* Rock Ed *at ng* Dakila *sa* Nov. 11."

Artists, musicians, students, rock stars, photographers all showed up at the Baywalk stretch along Roxas Blvd. Some came in groups, while many showed up alone.

Join us again for Sunday Silence II on Dec. 16. Same place, same time. Rain or shine. Wear blue

Aia de Leon of Imago and Mark Escueta of Rivermaya came on their own. Character actor Tado Jimenez brought his whole family. The de Veyra brothers of Radioactive Sago Project showed up, along with Marco de Leon, Paramita's lead guitarist. Howie Severino biked by because he lived in the area, and many other students came in protest of something.

Some said they came to mourn the recent child-suicide in Davao, or because of the recent pardon of the former president. Others came to register their anger at the obvious corruption in government, or at least because they thought change should be happening.

We really didn't come together for other people to see or know what we were there for. We came for ourselves. We decided that each of us has his own "movement" and we wanted to represent those before the glorious sunset of that particular Sunday.

We showed up so we could realize that we were not alone in this fight for real change in our country, and its attitude towards itself.

The gathering last November was really more for the people who showed up, not for the people watching. As one Sunday Silence veteran put it, "Whatever it is you think we're protesting about, you're probably right."

Join us again for Sunday Silence II on Dec. 16.

Come for yourself. See who else is staying silent but is actually aware and very involved. We have to re-affirm that our silence doesn't always mean consent. That just because we're silent doesn't mean that things are okay with us.

We are restless. We are doing all we can, from where we are. We are still silent, but coming together somehow.

Same place, same time. Rain or shine. Wear blue.

For details on how to join Sunday Silence II, visit www.rockedphilippines.org www.dakila.org.ph or lomomanila.multiply.com; e-mail info@rockedphilippines.org

Creating my own Butterfly Effect

By Ruby De Vera
Contributor

I hope the little girl I'm helping send to school now will learn to recognize good opportunities and seize those that come her way

ANY IDEALISM WE ONCE had as students promptly vanishes when reality hits us hard outside of school.

In most cases reality comes in the form of your first minimum-wage paycheck. While some lucky ones do not pass through this phase, I once did. The ideals I had when I was a well-praised student in the university seemed so foolish when confronted with my pitiful 15 days' salary.

Why care about the world when more pressing matters needed my attention? Rent and bills are here, now, while the ozone layer and the news of genocide in some faraway country are too unreal for me to comprehend.

The most I've come to changing the world is exercising my right of suffrage. But then again, what's so special about that? I've not seen any change around me.

For a while, I wasn't a big fan of making a difference in the world I lived in. It's just too big a concept for one person, and I was but an inconspicuous speck in the grand scheme of the universe. In a

CREATING/ C3

ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

A more peaceful me

By Maris A. Mortel
Contributor

EVEN THOUGH I HAVE NO BEAUTY-queen illusions whatsoever, I'd also say "World peace" if asked what my greatest wish would be.

I'm not talking about the war in Iraq, the ceaseless feuding among Muslims and Christians, the pitiful cries of starving children in some poverty-torn nation in Africa. I'm not even touching on Britney's latest debacle or another government scam. I'm just looking at a person's own humble, day-to-day existence.

This year I've experienced and seen how small moments of peace can uplift my spirit and disposition, however great the crisis that's wreaking havoc on my sanity. Peace is what I experience when I meditate. In the stillness and silence I can let go, put my burdens down, rest and recharge.

It's a wonder that with the benefits of meditation as an effective stress-reliever, more people don't practice it. The physical changes I've experienced during meditation, such as slowness of breath and heartbeat, bring me to a relaxed state where my worries and stresses are scrubbed away.

The act of meditating is about thinking constantly along a certain thing or thought. Meditation has been practiced in different ways for thousands of years. The spiritual aspect, such as the goal of oneness or closeness with the Divine in religions like Buddhism and Christianity, has been a fundamental reason for meditation.

Devoted practitioners usually live in seclusion away from the hustle and bustle of society. Yet today there are many methods that cater to our modern (meaning fast-paced and strenuous!) lifestyles, ensuring that almost anyone can benefit from practicing meditation.

Meditation can benefit a person both physiologically and emotionally. A more restful state lowers the levels of cortisol and lactate released by the body, which causes a decrease in high blood pressure and muscle tension (not to mention those nasty headaches!). It also results in an improved immune system, which in turn enables a person to be more productive in all areas of life.

Furthermore, meditation is also a mental exercise that has been known to improve concentration and focus.

The pressures of daily living can get overwhelming. Meditation is a way to relax that doesn't require any special equipment or costly medication. When I come out of meditation I feel calmer. I have a renewed sense of self, and I can see things with a clearer and more positive outlook. The longer I practice meditation, the more in touch I am with myself.

And because I am comfortable and confident with myself, I am more at ease with people I meet throughout the day. I am able to be more accepting and tolerant of situations that occur around me. This is what a few minutes of inner peace can give me.

So if there's one thing I can do to help change the world for the better, it would begin with a more peaceful me.

Meditation allows me to be more accepting and tolerant of situations that occur around me

THE AUTHOR (second row from bottom, sixth from left) with her meditation group in Chennai, India

Creating my ...

From page C2

hundred years, would it really matter?

What if it did?

Then I heard of the Butterfly Effect. It encapsulates what chaos theory is all about—the flutter of a butterfly's wings can cause a tornado at the opposite side of the world.

I first heard of World Vision through a friend who was sponsoring a child from Palawan. For a very minimal amount per month, you could send a poor child to school. These children's families live daily on less than what we pay for a cup of coffee to get that "free" planner. I thought that it wouldn't hurt for me to sacrifice what I would pay for a dinner and a movie, so I could help a child go to school.

I chose a girl to sponsor, because in spite of all the gender equality awareness campaigns out there, women and girls still don't get equal footing with men and boys. There is still that old and idiotic notion that girls don't have to go to school because they'll marry anyway and just have to stay at home to raise their children and look after their husbands. I was determined to help reverse that view in my own small way.

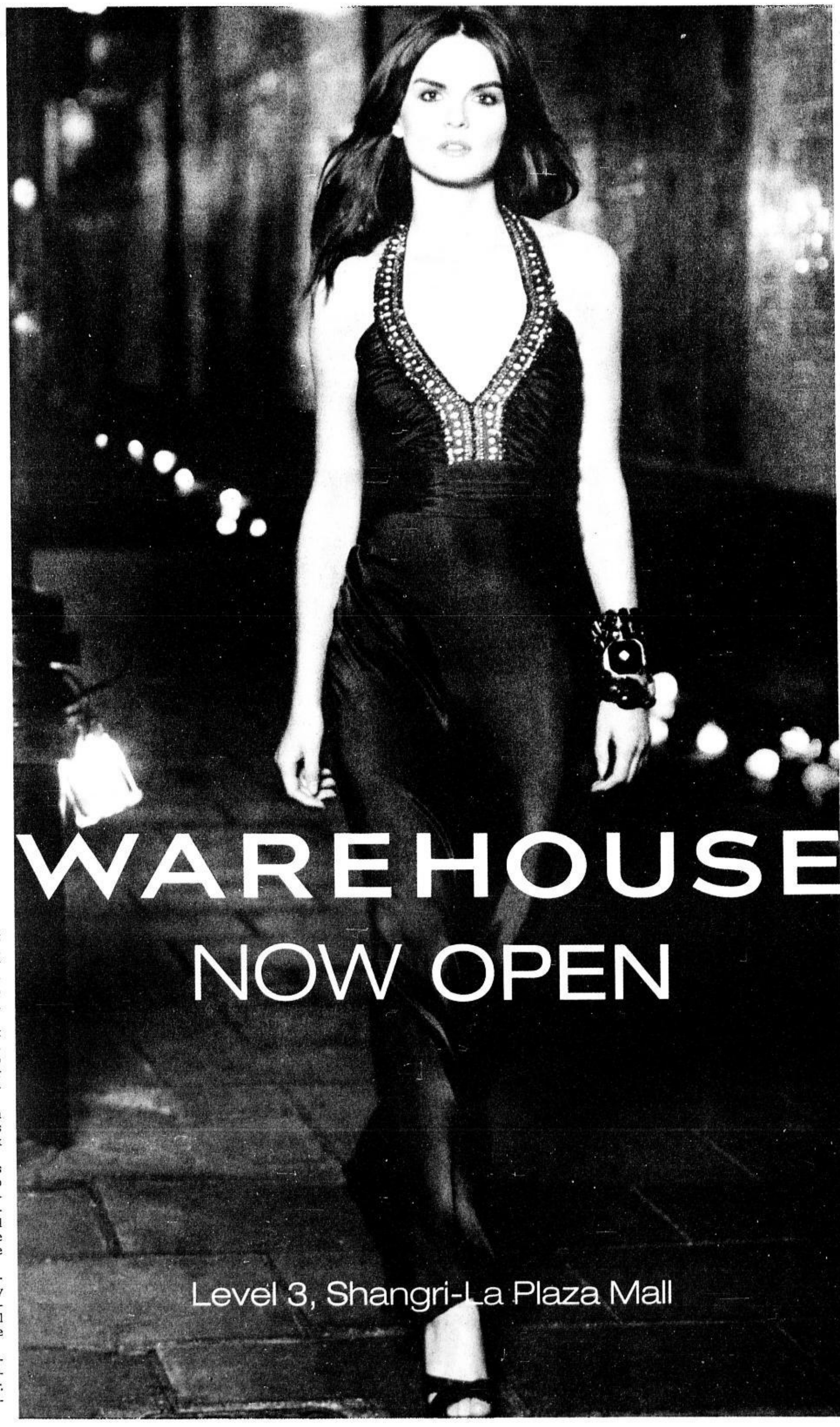
Getting an education is more than just learning from textbooks and the teachers. Education is just a catalyst for learning to have your own opinions, for opening your mind to a vast world of promise and possibilities.

I hope the girl I'm helping now will form her own ideals. Whether or not those ideals will vanish when she gets her first paycheck is up to her.

But I want her to realize that she always has a choice in anything that happens to her. I want her to be able to intelligently decide for herself, so that whatever the consequences, she can always say that she did her best. I can only hope that whatever she learns in school, she will put to good use out of it.

I want my girl to see the world as something she has every right to belong to. By helping her finish school, a lot of opportunities will open up for her. I hope she will learn to recognize them and seize those that come her way.

The universe, after all, is made up of inconspicuous specks. I'm making a difference in the life of one person in particular. The flutter of her wings may only be the beginning of a bigger change.



SANYO
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DIGITAL MOVIE CAMERA
Life in a New Direction

FLOWER Children. Jen and author bonding

YOUNG at heart

The sidekick

I was that flash of inspiration and common sense that helped my friends learn the difference between "working to live" and "living to work"

MAKING work fun with friends

Did you know?
TV became the favored form of mass media in the 50's.
Introduced in 1951. Like TV, Cream Corn Starch is favored in households 'til now.
Also available: Cream ALL-PURPOSE FLOUR

By Nadine Madarang
Contributor

I WISH I COULD CLAIM THAT I HAVE done something more monumental or noble this year. Unfortunately, the only claim I can make about changing the world has to do with my playing the role of confidante and counselor to friends who'd lost their way in the corporate universe.

But I soon realized that this might not be such a small feat, after all. I've discovered that when you are a novice trying to prove your worth, the real world out there can be a battleground, and the chance of survival is greater when you face it with a sidekick.

I was that sidekick. I was that flash of inspiration and common sense that helped my friends learn the difference between "working to live" and "living to work."

Faye was one of my best friends in my former office. I was drawn to her because she was such a contradiction: extremely well-off and yet remarkably levelheaded. She was a hard worker, giving up her own time to help others get the job done. So when it was time for her to bid her job goodbye, she felt as if something had sucked out her courage and spirit.

I am proud to be one of those people who stood by Faye during her moments of career confusion. Perhaps coffee dates, phone calls, and words of encouragement were but momentary cures for a broken heart, but if they put a smile on her face and served as small steps that helped her get back on her feet, then they were enough.

I take pride in being able to do these little things because I've learned that kindness comes in small packages. I am even happier now because I know my kindness didn't go down the drain. Faye did get back on her feet. She is now helping in her family business and is living the life!

No choice

Having to let Faye go was hard enough for me. So when Jen, a best friend in my old job, also had thoughts of leaving, I was crushed. For a while, I felt as if I was all alone and I had no choice but to let go because I knew that she would be better off spreading her wings somewhere else.

When Jen asked me to help her make the best decision, I did not tell her to leave or stay. I just helped her find out for herself what would make her happier. At the end of the day, that's the only thing that really mattered.

Jen is a strong, smart, and talented young woman, but even the strongest, smartest, and most talented woman needs a friend in making life-altering decisions. She'd need someone to catch her when the weight of her worries becomes unbearable.

I am happy that I was that "someone" for Jen. During those unsettling and disheartening times in her life, I laughed with her and cried with her. As she held her breath, I, too, held mine. I fought for her and with her. I dreamed her dreams.

It is so easy for friends to say, "I will be there if you need me," but it's a promise that's always broken, easier said than done. If I had made any significant contribution in Jen's life, it would be that I fulfilled that promise to her, and that our friendship has endured.

Jen has found a new job, and in our last conversation, she gushed, "I am SO happy in my new job! I'm really enjoying here!" I beamed, knowing that I had played a part in her happiness.

Little things

Recently, another friend of mine, Nina, was torn between two jobs. One had a warm working environment but was impractical, while the other was promising but was infested with corporate sharks.

My advice? "Choose neither." I believe one of my talents is seeing what people can do and what they can make out of their gifts. As a friend, I felt it was my responsibility to make Nina realize that she was not mediocre, and hence, she could do so much more with her greatness.

At first, my advice was a little too much for her to take, and I could not blame her. We were, after all, neophytes who only recently dipped our feet into—and are still testing—the corporate waters. We needed to live, make a name for ourselves, and yes, make money. So I understood her hesitation.

In the end, however, she told me, "You are right. Remember my job dilemma? It's neither [of] those options." She realized that she was anything but mediocre, and found a job somewhere else.

So what did I really do to change the world in 2007? I wish I could say that I had done something that would be printed on history books, something worthy of the front pages of a magazine. But then again, maybe not. Rome wasn't built in a day. The world? Well, maybe it can't be changed in a year with just one giant blow. But little things like helping a friend and offering a part of yourself could be a start.

I'd like to believe that I had somehow made an impact in my friends' lives in my own little way. And if one day a few years from now, they become successful career women and great leaders, I can proudly say to those who'd look up to them, "In 2007, I changed their world. Now, it's their turn to change yours."

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Life in a New Direction

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LIFESTYLE

AUTHOR in his ad campaign for PETA

Following my animal instinct

When I realized that I'd be wearing nothing but underwear for the PETA ad, I did not hesitate. If you have to strip, strip for a cause

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•**Glutathione**. 500 mg. 60caps: P2,400.
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By Diether Ocampo

I BASICALLY STRIPPED. GOT MYSELF painted in stripes. And crouched inside a small cage. Okay, maybe you want more information than that.

When I found out what zoos were doing to animals, I knew I had to do something. I don't like telling people what to do, but sometimes you just have to take a stand. Animals in zoos live in bad conditions. I just wanted people to think about that.

It took me some time to come up with what I believe would be my best contribution: posing for an ad. But this was not just an ordinary ad. It's a PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) ad. They're the biggest organization fighting for animal rights around the world.

They'd been sending me their magazine, Animal Times, and it got me interested in helping animals. We'd been talking for a while about different issues, and so when we met, I offered my time for their zoo campaign. We worked on the concept and nailed down all the details for the shoot. When I realized that I'd be wearing nothing but underwear for the ad, I did not hesitate. If you have to strip, strip for a cause.

But it was awkward, being body-painted in a room full of people, even though I'd actually walked down a runway in just a tiny underwear. This was somehow different. With painted stripes all over me, I had to crouch in a cage, hold several poses while the flashbulbs went off. I thought to myself, "How in the world did I end up here?"

We have to realize at some point that if you deny a living being the space to perform its natural behavior, that if it's supposed to live with other animals of its kind and you suddenly force it to live in an enclosure with animals that it's not supposed to be with, it's going to have some impact on the animal.

Like the zebra, the very animal I tried to portray in this ad. Zebras are social animals. What's natural to them is that they have to be with other zebras, and in the wild, they also live with wildebeests and gazelles. At the Manila Zoo, there is only one zebra.

Unnatural environment

In school, teachers would say it's educational to go to zoos. But knowing what I know now, zoo trips are never educational. Well, I guess they do teach us that it's okay to keep animals confined and make them do as we please. But that's not what we want to teach kids. We want our kids to respect animals, not dominate them.

As long we keep these animals from doing what they are supposed to do, as long as we subject them to the unnatural environment of the zoo, we will never really see their true selves. What is educational about watching a monkey walk in circles inside its cage? What is educational about watching a zebra stand in one spot, looking sad and lonely?

Animals needn't be put in confinement so kids can learn about them. Watching wildlife documentaries is better, because they offer more accurate depictions of animal life.

The only thing that zoos teach young people, or even adult visitors, is that we have the power to put animals in prisons and claim that it's for their own good. There's something so distorted about that.

I've been proud of a lot of the work I've done in movies. I'm happy I've gotten recognition for my work as an actor. But I think that when I get old, I'll look back on this PETA ad for its campaign against zoos, and consider it to be among the best work I've done.

If nothing else, it has gotten people thinking about other beings. I know people will have been informed about what zoos really do to animals. You can do your part, too, to save the animals. Don't go to zoos.

How far can your AIG Credit Card take you?

Treat your family to a magical moment at Enchanted Kingdom & enjoy Php220 OFF for each Good-Any-Day Pass.

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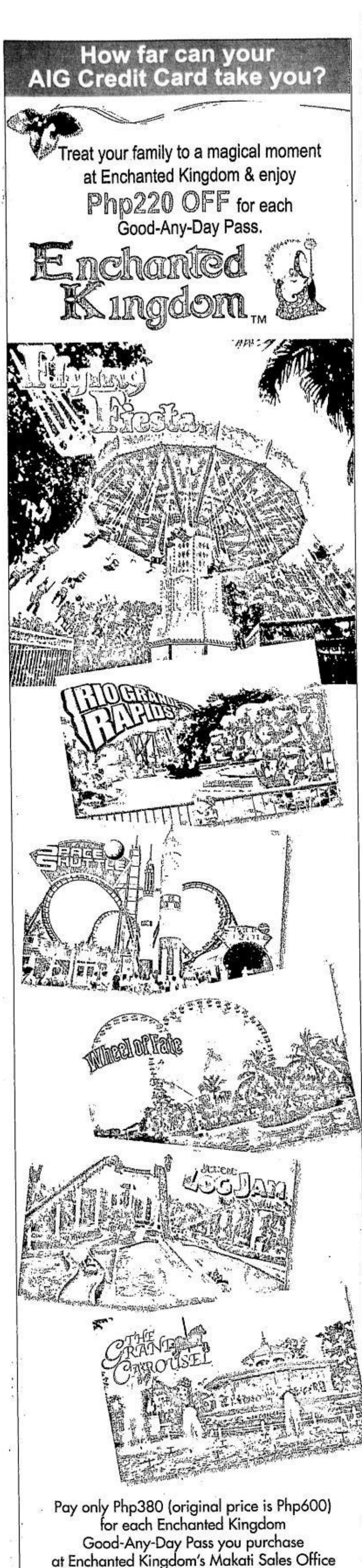

Pay only Php380 (original price is Php600) for each Enchanted Kingdom Good-Any-Day Pass you purchase at Enchanted Kingdom's Makati Sales Office using your AIG Credit Card.

- Maximum of ten (10) passes can be purchased per day
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- Enchanted Kingdom Makati Sales Office, Ground Floor, Biltmore Condominium, 102 Aguirre Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City
- To inquire about the park schedule and operating hours, please call 812-7291 or 830-2116

Promo Period: Until December 28, 2007

Call 683-8888 for details.

See flyers for details. Per DTI-NCR Permit # A2 - 460, Series of 2007.

AIG PhilAm

GUESTS dressed up as Christmas trees

PHOTOS BY GABRIEL ANTONIO REYES AND FRAN KATIGBAK

For the kids—and the kid in me

By Ruth L. Navarra

I celebrated my birthday this year with the orphans of the Settlement House of Asociacion de Damas de Filipinas in Paco, Manila. It was a riot

THE AUTHOR (back row, center) with her mom and friends REYES

TWO-YEAR-OLD JEFferson introduced himself to my parents by reaching for my *tatay* with both hands.

Tatay, the rascal that he is, teased him by hiding his hands behind his back. Jefferson retaliated by crying his eyes out. *Tatay* lost the battle. He reached for him, gave him a big hug, and Jefferson stopped crying.

My mom, not wanting to miss out on the action, also reached out for him and made him sit on her lap. She became an instant fan of the boy, and she kept on demanding toys and treats for him from me.

It was one of the stories that I saw and heard when I celebrated my birthday at the Settlement House of Asociacion de Damas de Filipinas in Paco, Manila.

It's funny how some of my friends and family reacted when I told them I was having a party at an orphanage this year. They teased me endlessly how *"parang artista"* it all seemed.

Sometimes I laughed it off, sometimes I took the time to explain that I was actually inspired by another friend who celebrated her birthday there. I can still remember the first time I came to the House. The kids were singing songs and I found them all to be overwhelmingly beautiful.

One kid, however, stood out from the rest. His name is Norvin and he pulled me in front when the host asked them to bring the prettiest "ate" in the room. I'm a sucker for flattery and he became my instant favorite. I promised him I'd be back.

Simple things

Initially, I thought I was going to do it alone so I prepared in advance. I bought some ingredients for the food and the toys two months before the actual party. But my family and friends kept pestering me about what they could bring.

I found out that orphanages needed simple day-to-day things like toiletries, powdered milk and vitamins. But they also welcome things like toys, clothes and books.

I knew my friends are fun to be with, but I never realized how big their hearts were. The turnout of donations was more than what I had expected. Even people who couldn't come to the party sent stuff instead.

The INQUIRER Read Along Team donated a box full of children's books, while Alitaptap Storytellers Inc. sent a volunteer to read a book to the kids.

But what I appreciated most was how patiently my family and friends interacted with the kids. Believe me, handling energetic 10-year-olds and below is not as easy as you think. It's a riot.

They will be all over you. They will want to see your camera and your phone. They will ask their shoes to be tied. At first, you have to coax them to join the games, but after the initial shyness, they will demand to join in every time. They will also ask to be kissed and hugged every once in a while.

Before we said goodbye, the kids gave us a dance number and taught us how to do the "amazing" and "fireworks" clap. I expect that my friends and I will be using those claps in our future badminton and futsal sessions.

The kids kept on saying we should come back and visit them again. Jefferson didn't want to let go of my mom. He hugged her tightly and cried again.

Afterward, most of my friends said that it was a good thing we pushed through with it. Some of them voiced intentions to do things like that regularly, and not just in orphanages but in other institutions as well.

Back home when we were having our family dinner, my mom couldn't stop talking about Jefferson. She was worried that the toys she gave him would be taken away by older and bigger kids. She was worried if he was eating enough food and getting enough nutrients.

That's how I changed the world this year. And it's not about the toys and stuff that we handed out or the food that we prepared.

It's about introducing the people I love to the children whose lives they could shape. It's about making them care. It's about showing them an alternative way of doing something about poverty. It doesn't take a gazillion pesos. It just takes one life, one child to make our world a better place.

ALITAPTAP Cha reads about a boy who wipes his snot everywhere.

REYES

Faith, energy and commitment

In NY, I stopped by famous museums to educate myself further in the arts, and memorized subway connections to truly experience how to move about on my own

By Gionna Cabrera
Contributor

THE MAGNITUDE OF an individual's contribution to society has to do with a lot of factors, and it becomes great when one's networks are solid and when the systems in different settings are efficient.

I was in New York from New Year to Valentine's Day this year, savoring the vibrant culture of pioneering innovation in that city. I related to the fashion world, having close friends who were successful with their careers in the business, so I attended a few Bryant Park shows and frequented flagship retail havens.

I stopped by famous museums to educate myself further in the arts, and memorized subway connections to truly experience how to move about on my own. To be productive, I wanted to see how things went in the United Nations' New York headquarters, so through a good recommendation I worked for the UAE department and made good friends with those who had similar aims of contributing to global well-being.

My stint ended soon enough, and come March I was back in Manila. Once again my contribution was to be a blue-blood Filipino in the postmodern ethics of the Big Apple, relating with everyone there according to the Golden Rule, and seeing the world through fresh eyes acquired from my many adventures in the urban jungle.

March was dedicated to Bb. Pilipinas Charities Inc.'s annual beauty pageant, which I co-hosted with some celebrities.

By April it was already fashion week, and I juggled some work as a freelance writer and model. People were preparing for the national elections after Holy Week, and I did my part in campaigning for pro-government parties, with my mother running as vice mayor of a rural town in Quezon for the second time.

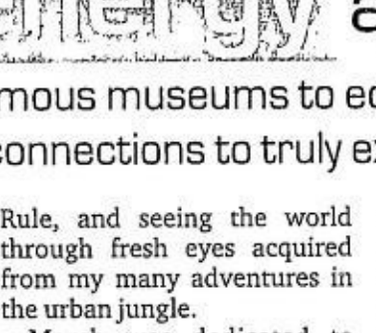
The enthusiasm and energy I spent participating in the spectacle of Philippine politics was maxxed out in the month of May. I soon found myself in Kuala Lumpur acting as a judge in its Miss Universe-Malaysia contest. Then I attended the Independence Day celebration of Filipinos in Bangkok, after having my rounds of retail therapy.

The third quarter of the year was spent juggling more events and improving my journalism skills.

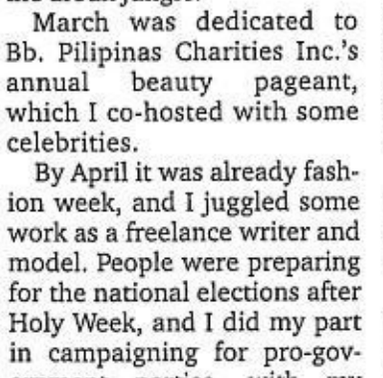
I believe I've changed the world in 2007 by participating in our generation's collective move toward finding opportunities that would not only promote character development, but also break stress-inducing monotony and homogeneity—the sickness of thinking and acting like everybody else.

At the recently held Second International Congress on Life and Love which I joined, the battle cry was "Chastity," which is not restraint but a way of life through conscious choice. That's a step in breaking the increasingly permissive mind-set of young people in our country.

As a former Miss Universe-Philippines (2005), I believe it is one of my duties as a goodwill/beauty ambassador of the Philippines to be consistent in my causes (charity) and promote the values and aspirations of the country's future movers and heroes. In 2007, I changed the world by cherishing small victories, with faith and energy.



CO-HOSTING the pageant



MEETING people from all over the world

AUTHOR (second from left) with fellow Miss Universe candidates

Feed the world with words

By Adrian M. Dy
2bul Contributor

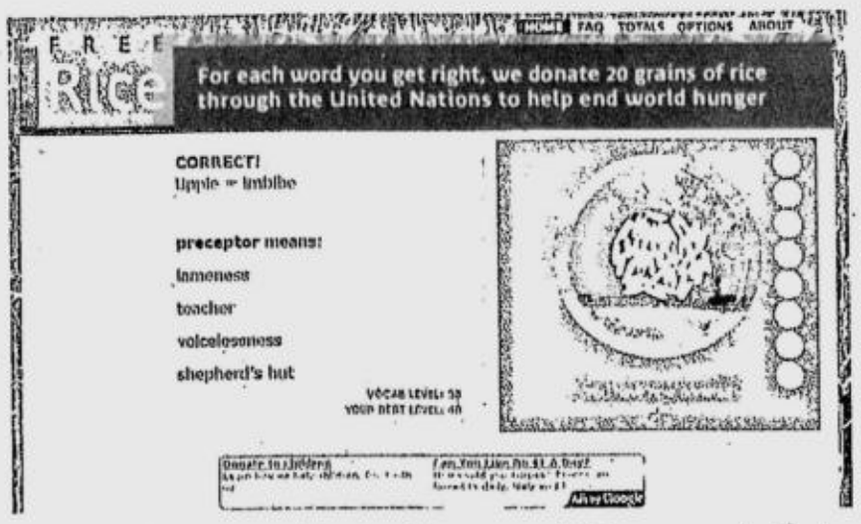
I JUST DONATED 200 GRAINS OF RICE TO starving people in Africa in the two or so minutes I'd spent procrastinating before starting this article.

For the past two weeks, whenever I felt like it wasn't quite time yet to start working on an assignment, or when I was counting down the minutes until my podcasts had finished downloading, I'd been donating rice, usually about five or so bowlfuls, which meant that five or so people somewhere had gotten to eat a meal.

Through the magic of www.freerice.com, anyone can donate rice and at the same time improve his or her vocabulary! Does that sound like a weird combination? Perhaps, but it works and it works well, so don't knock it until you've tried it.

Basically, the site's interface is like one of those videogame-slash-quiz show screens. The computer will give you a word and four choices as to what that word means. Each answer you get correct earns someone in the world 20 grains of rice. If you get it wrong, the computer tells you the right answer and adjusts the level of difficulty for you. Everybody wins!

Also on the screen is a difficulty level counter, to track how high your vocabulary level is. The higher the number, the more difficult the words are, so all the competitive-minded out there will enjoy this game as well. There are 50 levels all in all, but the FAQ tells us that it's nearly impossible to get anything higher than 48, unless you've got Dictionary.com up in another tab in your browser.



So of course, that begs the question, why shouldn't you just muck up the program to get all the right answers for you? Wouldn't that save world hunger? The answer is no.

While playing the game, a series of unobtrusive banner ads runs at the bottom part of your screen. Those sponsors are the ones paying for the rice you're sending, and if everyone and their hacker-cousins are running programs, the sponsors will pull the ads out. Which means no rice for hungry people.

But don't despair, there's nothing wrong with learning new words after all. The level system incorporated in the game can also serve as a friendly bragging point for you and your friends.

Since Free Rice began last October 2007, the site has raised 4,550,033,230 grains of rice. Amazing when you consider the fact that it used to be 10 grains of rice for every correct answer!

So this Christmas break, instead of playing something like Diner Dash or Hallway Wars, why not win someone some rice? You'll make Christmas a bit merrier for people out there who need it.

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Celebrate the holidays and enjoy special treats when you use your AIG Credit Card.

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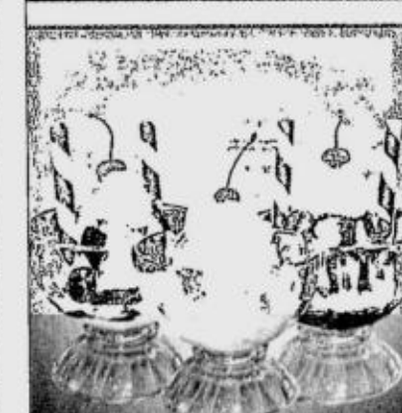
Gerry's Grill
FREE Sisig
For a minimum purchase of Php750
or
FREE Leche Flan
For 2 for a minimum purchase of Php500
Valid until January 31, 2008
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 5352, Series of 2007



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FREE Rocky Road or Cookies & Cream or Mango Caramel Ice Cream
For a minimum purchase of Php750
• Choice of either one of three flavors
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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 5376, Series of 2007

It's gotta be
Shakey's

Upon purchase of either Large or Party, Thin or Thick Crust Pizza and a Pitcher of Iced Tea or Lemonade
• Free pizza is of the same size and crust of pizza purchase
• Choice of Hawaiian Delight or Pepperoni
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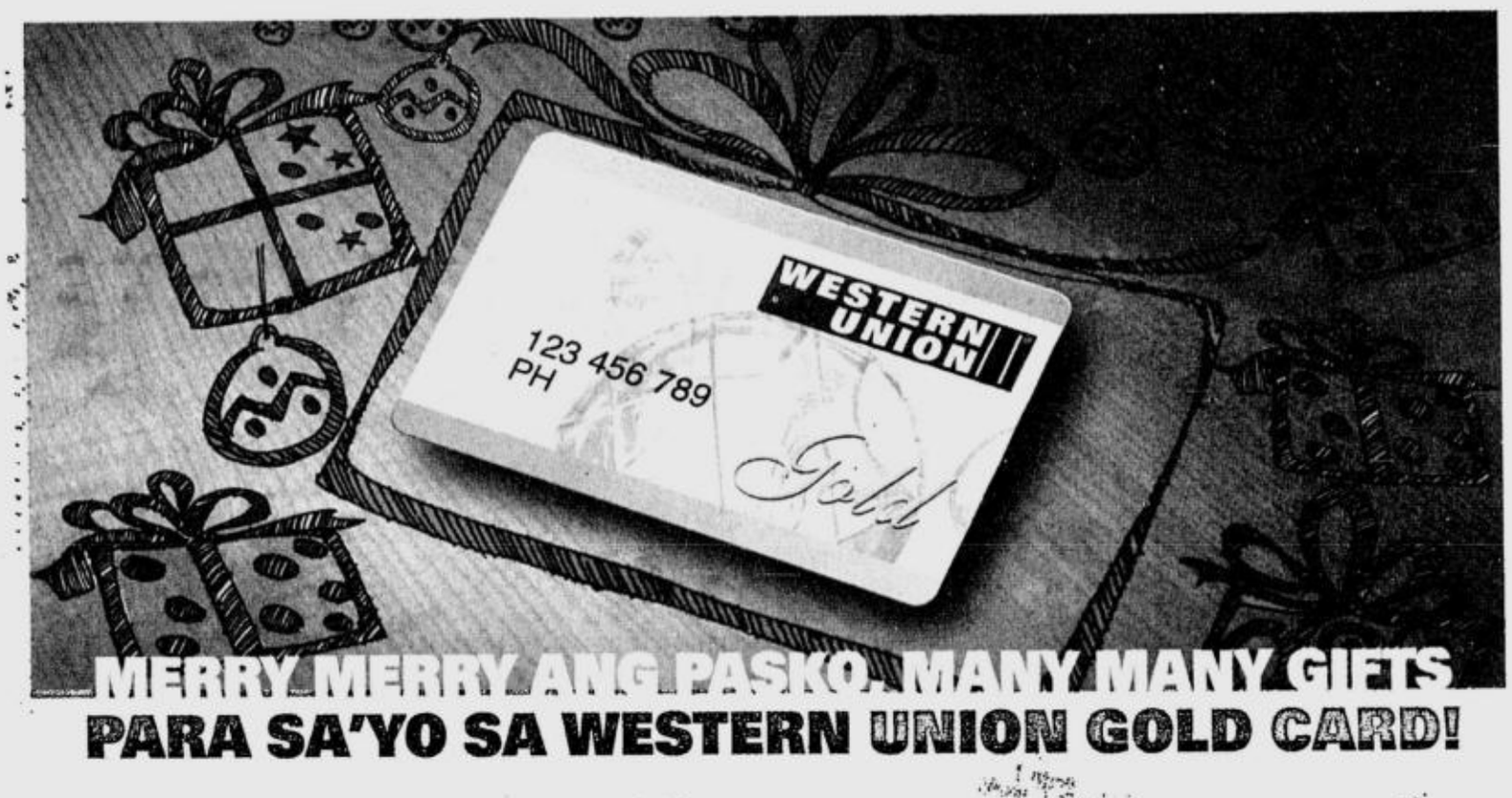

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Goldilocks	5% discount on greeting cakes
HBC	Free SANSAN matte lipstick #6 4gm. for a minimum purchase of P125.00

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AIG PhilAm

Hands, not alms

By Kate Alvarez
2bU! Contributor

BIANCA Valerio with one of Kanlungan's elderly

I DON'T GIVE ALMS TO THE poor anymore. I don't give my spare change to street kids tugging my skirt for money. After years of being in the real world, I finally understand what my university professors and theology classmates told me: "You are not helping the poor by giving them your spare change."

If you give P5 a day to every street kid you encounter after school or work, you won't alleviate their poverty. You are spoiling them by keeping them in the streets. Adult beggars will refuse to find a job, because begging in the streets actually earns more than our country's minimum wage. Poor children will no longer go to school because their parents are using them to make money.

Giving spare change to the poor is an easy way out for our social conscience. We see a starving person in the street. We feel guilty. We pick a few coins from our pocket and hand it to him. We get instant gratification. We go on with our luxurious lifestyles and buy a grande mocha at Starbucks.

But really now, did we change the world? Did we make any significant improvement in that poor person's life? No. Not even if we give the kid P100. Not even if we give an old lady a sandwich. Not even if we celebrate our 18th birthday at a charity ward.

We spend so much time immersed in the workaday world that we think we are doing our duty to help our less fortunate brothers by giving them our spare change or extra sandwich. Some people spend their birthday at a charity ward, spending thousands of pesos on gifts and food, and then go home with a relieved conscience.

And then what? How many of us have actually gone back to that charity institution we supported a few years back?

I raise my hand.

Supporting charities is more than just a one-time deal. It's more than just dole-outs. It's about sitting down with people and finding ways to make an impact in their lives. It's about teaching poor kids how to read instead of giving them coins in the street. It's about spending time with abandoned aging people instead of just dropping off a sack of canned goods in their huts.

It's a commitment that only a few people are willing to take. This year I've decided to take the first step: finding an institution that I can give my long-term devotion to.

Charity event

I was invited by C2 Life to spend a day at Kanlungan Ni Maria, a home for the aged in Antipolo. As part of their body-mind-soul activities, C2 Life spent nearly half the year organizing physical activities such as yoga and cultural activities such as walking tours. To cap off a successful year, they invited C2 Life members like myself to this month's charity venture.

Just when I thought I was in for another one-time charity project, I met a group of volunteers committed to making a difference in people's lives: Hands On Manila. This non-profit organization taps companies, schools, and individuals to provide volunteer work for their partner charities and organizations. Kanlungan ni Maria is just one of the many that Hands On Manila supports.

As I signed my name on their members list and received my volunteer "passport," I knew I'm in this for the long run.

Oldies but groovies

At Kanlungan ni Maria, each volunteer had to pick a *lola* or *lolo*. The groovy *lolas* were the popular choices. Lola Linda in her bright red dress, multiple bangles and pink surfer shades was an instant hit. Lola Pina, who talked about her beauty pageant award, was a friendly fixture.

As each of the elderly found his or her volunteer partner, I spotted Lola Belen, with her shoulders hunched as she sat quietly in the second row. Model Bianca Valerio and I were assigned to her, and it was no easy task. She barely met our eyes as

THE OLDIES but groovies take a class photo.

we talked to her.

Minutes after trying to strike a conversation with the timid old lady, a social worker went up to us and said, "Oh sorry, she's the most quiet person in Kanlungan. She rarely talks to anyone. Would you like us to pair you up with another one?"

I looked around at the happy volunteers, laughing about with their *lolas* and *lolos* who eagerly participated in the program. "No, I think I'll stay with Lola Belen," I said.

The social worker told me that she only spoke in Bicol, which is why she rarely talked to anyone. Bingo! I said to myself. I struggled to remember all the native terms my Bicolano grandparents had taught me.

Lola Belen would nod or shake her head once in a while and utter small words that I couldn't make sense of. Bianca tried her best to make her laugh, but *lola* would barely converse with us. Then we found her weakness.

"Would you like me to apply some makeup on you?" Bianca asked in Tagalog as she whipped out her makeup kit. Lola Belen broke into a toothy grin. Yes, we finally made progress!

In between brushing her cheeks and lids with pink makeup, Lola Belen would flash her toothless grin at the mirror. I couldn't tell if she was making fun of us or if she was enjoying her makeover.

Other volunteers had it easy. They got the elders to dance and sing to the tunes of Aiza Seguerra, who also joined the event. Other elders openly shared their stories and personal photos. Meanwhile, Bianca and I could barely get Lola Belen to answer our questions. We only got her to laugh when Aiza went up to her and when the social workers complimented her makeup.

I never left her side, not even if she gave me a disturbed look whenever I put my arms around her. I kept telling her stories of my grandparents from Bicol. I told her that she and my *lola* have the same name. She looked up when I told her that I loved my *lola's laing*. She nodded when I asked if she, too, cooked delicious *laing*. At the end of the Christmas party, I ushered Lola Belen back to the van.

"Goodbye, Lola, I'm leaving now," I said in my shaky Bicol. Then, for the first time she looked me straight in the eye with a piercing look and nodded. I closed the door and left, wondering why grownups would leave their old parents in places like Kanlungan to fade away into oblivion, while getting occasional entertainment from celebrities, social workers and volunteers whose names they would probably never remember.

Kanlungan ni Maria is located at 17 Lanzones St., Nayong Silangan Subd., Antipolo City.

Visit www.handsonmanila.org or call 8435231 and e-mail info@handsonmanila.org

I've joined the nationwide bandwagon by bringing myself closer to having an R.N. affixed to my name

WITH classmates from nursing school

A step out of the ordinary

By Vanessa Arellano Doctor
2bU! Correspondent

WE USUALLY EQUATE "changing the world" with an effort so gargantuan that it involves millions of people benefiting from something like a miracle cure or a shift in national leadership. For individuals like me, however, a world-change can also mean just an attempt at shaking the ordinary. After all, our "world" is the environment we live in.

This year, I made my attempt by taking another degree, waking up at 4 a.m. to travel two hours to get to where I could finish this degree, and having the courage to get out of my comfort zone to make friends with people whose orientations were the opposite of mine.

I've joined the nationwide bandwagon by bringing myself closer to having an R.N. affixed to my name.

The reasons

I can't really say I took up Nursing because I am a naturally caring person and would like to be of service. In fact, whenever people ask me why I'm willing to go through all the required community service, hospital duties, and face endless lectures and exams all over again, I find myself at a loss for reasons.

Money is one. A chance to travel is another. An open door to a new adventure comes third. But, mostly, it's really just to be exposed to something new, especially new people.

I got what I wished for and more. I didn't just meet interesting individuals. I've actually become friends with them.

The truth is, I was housebound (by choice) for most of 2007 and had been practically glued to the Internet from sunup to sundown. I shopped for everything, from clothes, to shoes, to lip balm online. And whenever I was away from the house for more than two hours, I started to feel uncomfortable and vulnerable.

So, when I was encouraged to take up a Nursing course at a city two hours away from mine, I was terrified. I didn't mind the long drives—I'm used to seeing zero buildings and a thickness of trees, but I feared interacting with other people in the flesh.

The first day of class felt like hell because we each had to introduce ourselves (and I hadn't been in school for about five years!).

The high schoolish-ness of it all made me feel a little inferior, especially since we were all professionals who were supposedly already good at what we did. It was hard to prove one's worth within a 30-second "Hello" spiel, and there I was thinking that back where I came from I had already proven what I needed to.

In short, I was back to being a nobody. It was nerve-wracking.

Keeping the sanity

Thankfully, I am now on my second semester. During the four months I labored over Anatomy and Microbiology (take note: my first degree was Political Science), I found affinity with a group that, despite the personality differences, managed to go beyond the negative to highlight a common goal.

The best thing about dealing with individuals who are on their second attempt at schooling is that the maturity level is a notch higher.

To say that Nursing is a difficult course is an understatement. Yet, having a set of classmates who keep each other motivated to finish is enough to, at least, keep us out of removal exams and coursing through smoothly from one semester to the next. The drive to overcome the original challenge I faced of going back to school has been fortified by a support system that is non-judgmental and truly helpful.

All of a sudden, the effort to solely change the world I live in has been replaced by team effort that consists of family, friends and newfound friends.

There is no doubt that the course can only get harder and more demanding as I near graduation, but with warm-blooded motivation, I doubt I'll get as excited with getting a new online message in the next three years.

E-mail the author at ness_doctor@yahoo.com

A lean, mean multitasking machine

By Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent

For sheer versatility, the Sony Ericsson W910i is the must-have phone to beat this holiday season

THERE ARE PHONES THAT are designed to look sleek and sassy, and there are phones that are made to withstand the most abusive cell-phone users—the ones who frequently drop their units to the floor, talk until the wee hours of the morning, and wear out the keypads with constant texting.

The Sony Ericsson W910i is a phone that can withstand the most manic cell-phone users without breaking out a sweat—figuratively, of course. The latest in Sony Ericsson's Walkman phone line, the W910i is equipped with all the tools needed for listening to music, playing video games and surfing the Internet.

While most phones are capable of playing hours of music, what sets the W910i Walkman phone apart from the others is its Shake Control feature, which allows users to change tracks by simply shaking the cell phone—almost as if it's a pinball machine.

Skip one song forward by flicking the phone to the right, or take a step backward by shaking it to the left. Want to shuffle your playlist? Shake your phone back and forth for a crazy take on a mixed playlist. You can also use the same shuffling motion to play the games available on your phone, should you tire of pressing buttons just to make your move.

Another new feature on the W910i is SensMe, which allows for searching your music collection and creating playlists based on tempo and style as opposed to searching for songs based on artists and albums. So if you're looking for showtunes (or chillout music), all you have to do is go by the phone's dot matrix system in order to track the kind of music you're in the mood for.

It sounds much more complicated than it really is, but the SensMe system really does make sense. By grouping together the songs that have similar dot matrix patterns, the W910i selects songs that you might be in the mood for (after all, you don't want to spend too much time creating playlists on your computer).

The phone also has an innovative media browser system, which lets you access your music, videos, podcasts and photos from a single icon on the phone menu. The Media Manager PC program allows easy access to your files through your computer, so you can search and select music and convert the tracks to mobile phone-compatible formats before you even transfer the files (which is done via USB).

While the W910i won't beat a separate mp3 player, you've got more than enough music to get you going for the whole day, as it has room for over 900 songs (with a 1GB micro memory stick). So if you're not planning to download thousands of songs, the Walkman phone should be more than adequate.

As with all Sony Ericsson phones, the battery life of the phone is excellent, lasting up to three days without charging (two if you're a heavy cell-phone user). The W910i is also equipped with a 2-megapixel camera, so if you accidentally leave your camera at home or just want to take goofy photos with your friends, this phone's got you covered.

For sheer multitasking power, the W910i is the must-have phone to beat this holiday season.

E-mail the author at biancaconsunji@yahoo.com

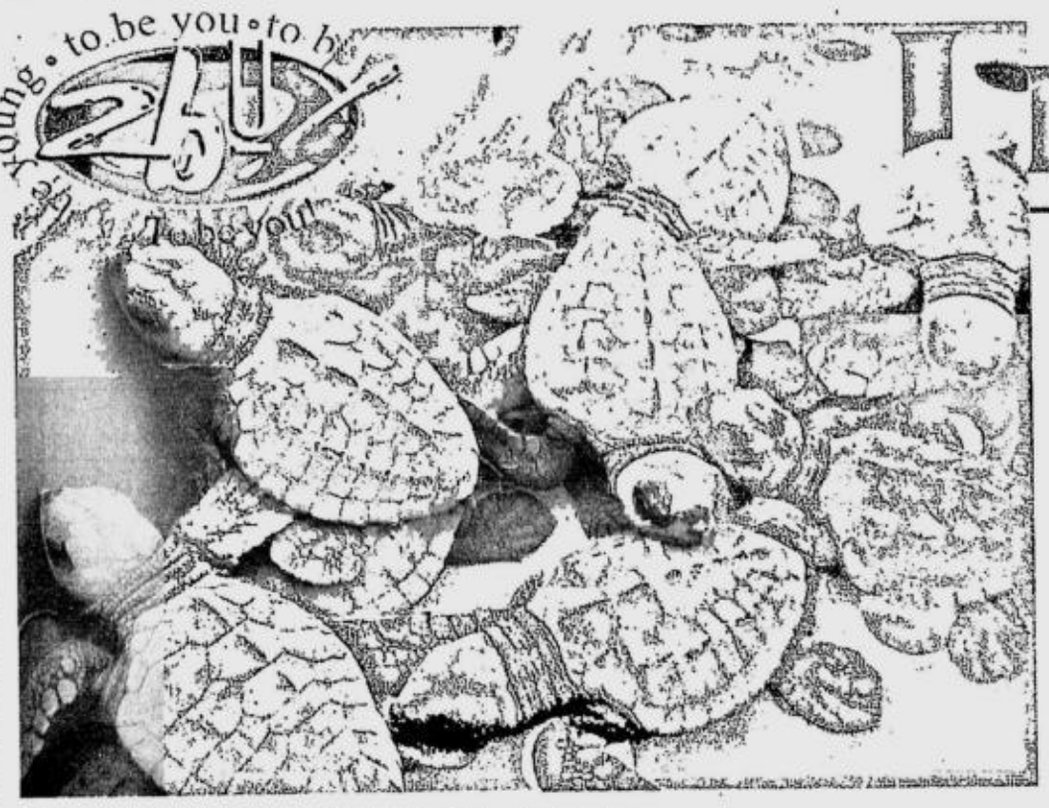
FOR THE PAST TWO WEEKS, WE'VE BEEN GETTING hundreds of e-mails from readers who shared with us their favorite celebratory and get-ready-for-a-date songs. However, it was the entries from Monique Ale C. Dantes and Jonathan Paul Lansang that really got our attention. Monique will soon be enjoying music from her W220i, while Jonathan Paul can get ready for his dates with the help of the W580i. Call 4339497 and look for Maita to claim your prize.

This week, we want to know: What music was playing on your earphones when you felt the highs of passing that final exam or the first day of vacation? What was playing when you got together or broke up and eventually made up?

Give us the best of your music memories to the weekly question and win a brand-new Sony Ericsson Walkman phone!

E-mail your answer to sonyericsson2bu@gmail.com. Include your name, age and contact information plus the song title, artist and music genre. Deadline for this answer is Dec. 14. A unique and funny answer will get you the Sony Ericsson W910i Walkman phone.

LIFESTYLE



PAWIKAN hatchlings wait to be released into the ocean.

So long, 'pagong'!

Text and photo by Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

WHEN ASKED TO WRITE on how I changed the world this past year, it took me forever to come up with something.

Sure, I did my share of everyday good deeds like helping random strangers or giving extra coins or restaurant leftover doggie bags to street people. But the more I thought of something seriously world-altering that I intentionally set out to do, the more time it took me to realize that there was really no particular cause I actively supported this year.

So I got out of my shell and looked for a particular cause to be involved with. After all, the year hasn't ended yet, and I could still contribute something positive to the world.

I ended up attending the Pawikan Festival last Nov. 28-30 in Morong, Bataan. Now on its third year, the festival continues to generate awareness and gather funds for Pawikan conservation.

Pawikans or marine turtles—all seven species in the world—are now highly threat-

SO LONG/ E3

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Did you know that only one to three percent of baby turtles reach maturity?

Don't let yourself go bald... even the ladies agree.

There's a lot you miss if you're bald—sharing intimate moments when your partner runs her hands through your hair...being confident to strike a conversation with women without feeling self-conscious about your receding hairline...pulling a suave move to give ladies a lasting impression...

Take Actor/Businessman Joey Marquez's advice, "Don't let yourself go bald." Like most men, Joey equates losing hair with losing charisma, potency and vigor. "You tend to look older with less hair. And nobody wants to look old. I'd rather be seen as classic, not old," added Joey.

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MANZANARES
Hair Restoration Center

THE SCIENCE OF CONFIDENCE

It's about time. Life is short and there's so much we can do to get the most out of it!

Hair loss is a natural course of nature that is experienced by both males and females. And it happens much earlier in life than we expect. So before you go into hibernation, give up your social life or worse, experiment on a remedy that's not right for you, stop and consider the NEWEST CLINIC IN THE PHILIPPINES THAT OFFERS THE ONLY PERMANENT SOLUTION TO HAIR LOSS.

MANZANARES HAIR RESTORATION CENTER is owned and operated by DR. FRANK MANZANARES JR., a Filipino Surgeon whose practice is solely dedicated to Hair Restoration. He trained in the United States with 18 years of Hair Restoration-Plastic Surgery Affiliations including medical and surgical research development of Hair Transplant techniques and work experience in Beverly Hills, haven of Hollywood celebrities -- probably the most demanding customers in the world.

WHERE TECHNIQUE MEETS ARTISTRY

Dr. M is one among the very elite doctors that offers the expertise of state-of-the-art Hair Restoration in the Philippines. It is a surgical process that has evolved from a science into an Art form. This requires a surgeon with a trained hand to create the most "natural" result that mimics Mother Nature; and is undetectable to even the most critical eye. The procedure includes Follicular Unit Grafting that, put simply, surgically "harvests" hair units from one part of your body and "implants" them to another part that needs it. And because it is your own hair that is transplanted, its re-growth will look and feel like your natural hair, made to grow in a direction that's most natural to its position.

RESTORE YOUTHFUL APPEARANCE

The quest for the proverbial Fountain of Youth has led our doctors to increasingly successful aesthetic practices; and in the case of hair restoration procedures, the most traditionally performed is SCALP-HAIR TRANSPLANTS, primarily in males.

The advances of surgical procedures these days have not spared hair transplantation, and have made scalp-hair transplants virtually unnoticeable. Dr. M is a leader in procedures for repairing the undesirable results from prior hair transplants and scarring or hair distortion from facial plastic surgery. This has made Dr. M the recognized expert in the treatment of hair loss in women - now strutting down catwalks and dancing their nights away with fuller, healthier hair that boosts their confidence and self-esteem in board rooms and lounges alike.

GET LUSH EYEBROWS AND EYELASHES

Originally performed on burn victims to restore the hair on eyebrows and eyelids, DR. M pioneered Eyelash Transplants in Beverly Hills for aesthetic purposes; and is now the fastest growing hair restoration procedure worldwide. In the Philippines, DR. M IS THE ONLY EXPERT IN EYELASH TRANSPLANTS, a very delicate procedure that requires perfect placement of hairs to mimic natural growth. He also performs the service on behalf of other popular Cosmetic and Plastic Surgery clinics in the country.

Likewise, if you seek to have full, thick eyebrows or maybe cover up a scar in the area, Dr. M can help you through his eyebrow transplantations following various reasons like trauma, heredity and over-plucking.

Now, you have a natural, healthy and painless alternative to fake eyelashes and tattooed eyebrows. Wake up in the morning with bright and wide eyes and express yourself with confidence. Then work your way towards a busy nightlife looking just as gorgeous as you did the whole day!

LOOK AND FEEL HEALTHY

Overall, nothing else makes us look great than looking healthy from within. A lush crop of hair, thick eyebrows and eyelashes may be the epitome of being in tip-top shape; but what's most important is how we feel inside. Youth is a frame of mind; and age is just a number, as they say. But if you feel that hair transplant is for you, you will be in the best hands with MANZANARES HAIR RESTORATION CENTER, where the emphasis is on establishing a solid doctor-patient relationship, guiding you through the entire process. An individual treatment plan is assessed for every patient, as Dr. M is one of only a handful of Surgeons able to offer all the procedures available. Every step of the process is performed personally by Dr. M, who has proven himself to thousands of patients worldwide.

CONFIDENCE DOWN TO A SCIENCE

The benefit of Hair Restoration is for life. The decision to take action against hair loss can be a difficult one; but by choosing the most qualified hair restoration expert, the decision becomes an easier one to make.

Invest in yourself. Inspire a newfound confidence that will affect how you look and project yourself forever. Get a one-day MANZANARES HAIR RESTORATION procedure for a lifetime of great and natural results.

Give us a call.

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e-mail: drfrank@manzanareshairrestoration.com,
www.manzanareshairrestoration.com

A diario novela by CARLO J. CAPARAS

To have and to hold

Art: ARNEL A. AVETRIA

A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA

PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR

GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT

ATOMO AND WEBOY

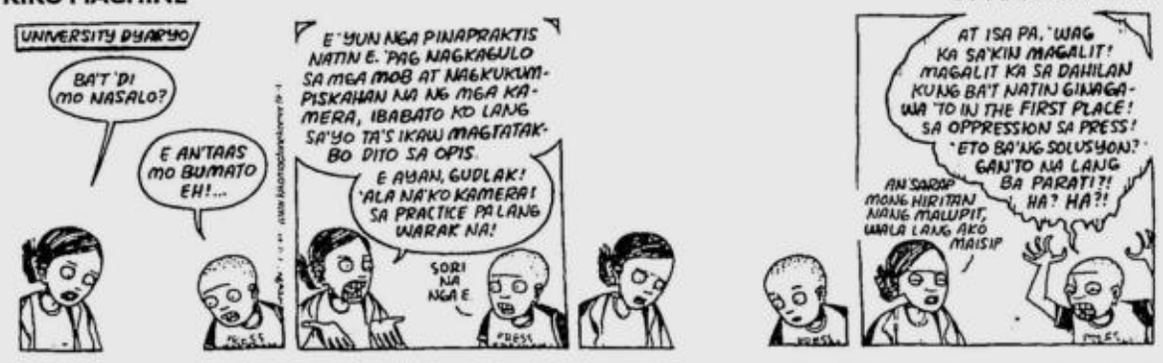
BY LYRA GARCELLANO

LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

KIKO MACHINE

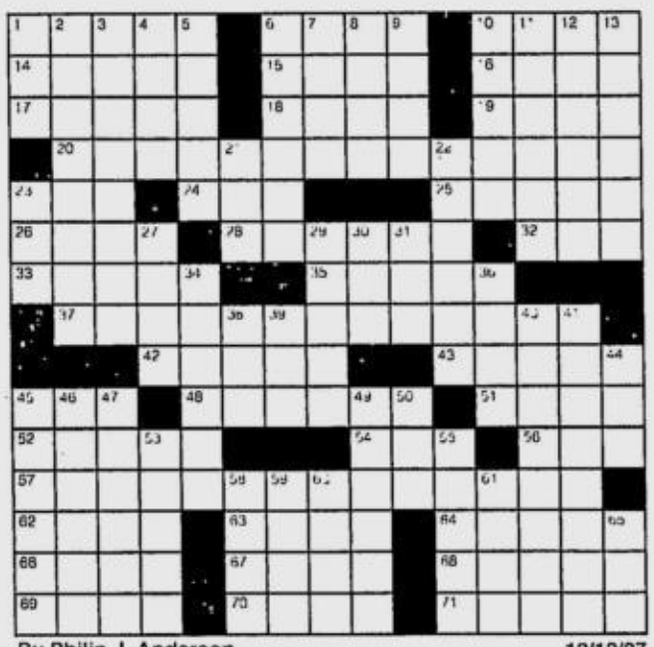
BY MANIX ABRERA



BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR

12/12/07

ACROSS
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10 Notable years
14 Pavarotti's voice
15 Settled a debt
16 Big swig
17 Capital of Vietnam
18 Ancient Semitic deity
19 NY theatrical award
20 Poor strategy at a track meet
23 Ginger __
24 ETO leader
25 Horse opera
26 __ fide (authentic)
28 Russian communes
32 Snaky character
33 Conductor Previn
35 AKC concern
37 Poor strategy in the casino
42 Laotian or Mongolian
43 Cut pieces
45 Single cereal grain
48 Maps in maps
51 Brief bad mood
52 Loud, resonant, metallic sound
54 Choose
56 Greek letter
57 Poor strategy in a liquor store
62 Ending word
63 Clumsy clod
64 Architect Saarinen
66 Part of speech
67 Russian saint
68 Right-hand page
69 Catch sight of
70 Drop, heavily
71 Impertinent

DOWN
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2 Like some sabbaticals
3 Subtle implication
4 Lunchtime
5 Pulverize
6 First bet
7 Zesty bite
8 Polynesian amulet
9 Norse god
10 Dangerous virus
11 Partial refund
12 "__ Restaurant"
13 Mans the helm
21 Actress Lupino
22 Baffling problems
23 Lawyers' org.
27 Operatic song
29 Steakhouse selection
30 Go astray
31 Neighbor of Syr.
34 Naval flag
36 Adams and Ameche
38 Martini ingredient
39 Notes in scales
40 Study of chem. reactions
41 Slurs
44 RR stop
45 Fuel rating
46 Los __, NM
47 Resume
49 Impatience indication
50 Tanning lotion abbr.
53 Simpleton
55 Cake levels
58 Gooey mass
59 Travel charge
60 Actor Weaving
61 Dog's bane
65 Actress Myrna

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

M	R	S	C	■	H	O	R	A	■	D	E	C	A	Y
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■	■	■	C	C	N	Y	■	P	R	E	G	A	M	E
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G	E	O	R	G	I	A	O	N	M	Y	M	I	N	D
A	N	N	I	E	■	■	C	R	I	S	■	E	T	S
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D	U	E	L	S	■	E	R	B	E	■	M	A	L	I
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12/12/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have a winning personality because you enjoy the company of others. You work to stay in shape because you're always aware of the impression you make on others. You're physically active, and you take care of your health. You have a natural sense of drama, and in social settings, you're entertaining. In the year ahead, you will study or learn something very valuable.

Birthdate of: Frank Sinatra, singer/actor; Jennifer Connelly, actress; Bill Nighy, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Money that has been owed to you might arrive today. Disputes about shared property finally might be settled. The wealth of others can favor you today. Be open to this.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): A friendship or even a romantic attachment could develop with an older person today. Someone older, wiser or more experienced than you has something to offer. (Just say "thank you.")

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): People at work are supportive of you in a very practical way. You also might get a promotion or advice that secures your future employment.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): This is an excellent day to teach children or young people. "A spoonful of honey helps the medicine go down." (Keep this formula in mind.)

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): This is an excellent day for real estate. It's also a good time to buy something beautiful for where you live that is long-lasting and attractive.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): This is a good day to sign contracts. Discussions with others are friendly and amicable, yet solid and reliable. Someone older could be involved.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Whatever you buy today will be a good value. It will be long-lasting and practical and at the same time, attractive in a pleasant way for you. It's a good day for business and commerce.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): This is a good day to lay your cards on the table with partners and close friends. People will be surprisingly receptive to what you have to say.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You're happy to live up to your side of things in relationships or bargains today. It won't be difficult, because you see why it's important.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Conversations with others, especially someone older or wiser, are definitely pleasant and helpful today. Be open to good advice wherever it might come from.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Relations with parents, bosses, teachers and authority figures are excellent today. This also applies to relationships with the police. If there's something you want, ask for it.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Make plans for further education or plans to travel somewhere. Your efforts today will have a pleasant payoff in the future. You also will be able to get a good value for money spent.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis SudoKu By Dave Green

				4				
	7		2		1			
	3	2				1		
	4						7	
3								2
7	2					5	9	3
	8		3	1			5	
	1		6	9			2	
	5	9	7	8	4	3	6	

Difficulty Level ★★★

12/12

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

1	2	5	7	6	4	3	9	8
4	8	6	3	1	9	2	7	5
3	9	7	2	8	5	1	4	6
8	7	3	5	4	1	6	2	9
6	1	2	9	3	8	4	5	7
5	4	9	6	2	7	8	3	1
2	5	8	4	9	6	7	1	3
7	6	4	1	5	3	9	8	2
9	3	1	8	7	2	5	6	4

Difficulty Level ★★

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So long, 'pagong'!

From page E1

ened with extinction because of human activities such as poaching, egg-gathering, slaughter, illegal fishing and pollution. In fact, many adult female turtles are hunted and killed on beaches during nesting season.

While their meat serve as food for poor communities, their shells and skin are used for several illegal by-products such as combs, guitars and accessories.

Marine turtle eggs, on the other hand, are gathered and sold in the black market where they command high prices because of their perceived aphrodisiac effects.

The entire Bagac and Morong coasts in Bataan are popular nesting grounds of three out of five turtle species present in the country: the Hawksbill, Olive Ridley and the Green Turtles.

To save these species, the Bataan community organization named Bantay Pawikan, Inc. which has been doing conservation work since 1999, with the help of the United Nations Development Grants Programme and the provincial government.

Harvesting turtles once provided Morong residents meager incomes that sent their kids to school and allowed them to buy

STUDENTS from Morong, Bataan pet a marine turtle from Pawikan Conservation Center.

food and pay debts—while inflicting damage to marine biodiversity, of course.

This led to a decrease in turtle nesters and a shorter nesting season. However, the endangered marine turtles have gotten a reprieve, thanks to the organization's conservation scheme and efforts to emphasize the importance of community participation in the program. The community-based project has also set up livelihood projects for the now reformed poachers.

During the festival, I joined government officials and other members of the media in releasing *pawikan* hatchlings to the ocean. From a bin brimming with adorable gray turtles, I selected a random hatchling, named him Donatello (my favorite character in the TV series "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" when I was a kid) and carefully picked him up.

I had to be extra gentle in handling Donatello because if he fell off, he would have broken a bone and might not make it out there in his natural habitat.

After some souvenir snapshots with my chosen hatchling, I released Donatello and let him wade into the saltwater to join Leonardo, Raphael, Michaelangelo, Ariel, Flounder and the rest of the marine world.

The act of releasing a tiny turtle into the ocean may not seem the most impressive world-altering effort, but in a world where animal extinction is a reality, that little effort is well worth it. Did you know that only one to three percent of baby turtles reach maturity? I hope my Donatello makes it.

E-mail the author at ninomarksablan@yahoo.com

I am not a plastic bag

By Kitkat Rodrigo
2bUI Contributor

THANKS TO AL GORE, EVERYbody's going green. I personally have not seen "An Inconvenient Truth" but I don't think it's a prerequisite to start thinking of the environment, of your future. I also don't think we should all start living like hippies and stop shaving our armpits and legs.

There are lots of ways one can go green. Printing on both sides of the paper, for example. Turning off the faucet while brushing one's teeth. Turning off the light when going out of the room.

Me? I choose to battle against the ubiquitous plastic bag.

An article I read early this year changed the way I look at something we take for granted all the time—plastic. Did you know that less than 1 percent of plastic bags are recycled? And that every single plastic bag manufactured still exists and hasn't even started degrading yet? Can you imagine how many plastic bags that amount to?

The human species could be extinct before everything plastic is erased off the planet. Plastic will outlive us all!

For the longest time, I've always had a lightweight tote bag stashed in my purse, and I use it to carry stuff bought when shopping. Only this year did I use it extensively, refusing plastic bags outright with each purchase, especially from convenience stores and fast food restaurants. These establishments are notorious for placing each item in a plastic bag.

I still get weird looks when I hand over my canvas tote, but I don't mind. I can only hope it won't be long before they start asking customers first before bagging purchases—"Ma'am, *ipa*-plastic

'Bag pa po?'

I'm coming clean lest you call me a hypocrite. I still drink Coke in cans, eat the occasional fast food (don't even get me started on styrofoam!), still use paper towels. When shopping for groceries, I still use plastic bags, but I make sure they get reused as lining for the garbage bin. The least I can say is that now I'm aware how much waste I generate from day to day and try to lessen it as much as I can.

That's the bottom line we need to be conscious of: what we throw away and what gets reused and recycled.

This Christmas, I plan to give out lightweight tote bags as gifts, accompanied by a plea to refuse plastic bags when shopping. I think that's a doable request. Much more preferable to asking them not to shave armpits and legs, anyway.

Visa gives cardholders a chance to win trips for two to the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games

All it takes to qualify for the weekly draw is to spend with your Visa card!

PHILIPPINES, 27 November 2007 - From now until 15 January 2008, anyone who spends at least PHP 1,000 in a single transaction on their Philippine-issued Visa Debit, Prepaid and Credit card will stand a chance to win a trip for two to the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games. Ten packages for two people each will be given away in Visa's "Beijing 2008 Olympics Visa Promotion". Limited edition Visa Olympic Games memorabilia will also be given out during the promotion.

Cardholders simply need to submit their personal particulars and transaction information online or through SMS to register for the promotion. Those who choose to register online can do so over the newly created Visa Olympics marketing website - www.visasupporters.com - and access the "Philippines" page and click on the "current promotions" link to access the registration page.

"Millions of people around the world are looking forward to what is arguably the world's number one sporting event and we believe that as a worldwide Olympics sponsor since 1986, and through this promotion, Visa is in a special position to make it easier for its cardholders in the Philippines to stand a chance at experiencing the Olympic Games and to show their support for their athletes in person," Visa International Country Manager for the Philippines, Bob Joubert, said.

Limited edition Visa Olympic Games memorabilia and one package to the Games will be given away during every week between 29 November 2007 and 24 January 2008. Two packages to the Games will be given out during the last two weekly draws.

Each package will be for two people and will consist of round-trip airline tickets, hotel accommodation, hotel transfers and passes to two events at the Games. Winners of the packages will also receive special Visa Olympic Games merchandise.

Winners will be notified via registered mail and through announcements in major daily newspapers. Each cardholder can only win once and if their name is drawn more than once, they will be awarded the package to the Olympic Games. .

The Philippines is one of several markets across Asia Pacific to launch this promotion which is part of Visa's regional Olympics marketing campaign.

About Visa: Visa operates the world's largest retail electronic payments network providing processing services and payment product platforms. This includes consumer credit, debit, prepaid and commercial payments, which are offered under the Visa, Visa Electron, Interlink and PLUS brands. Visa enjoys unsurpassed acceptance around the world and Visa/PLUS is one of the world's largest global ATM networks, offering cash access in local currency in more than 170 countries.

For further information, please contact:
Emily Dy / Nian Rigor
emily@eon.com.ph /
nian@eon.com.ph
8935642 loc. 127 / loc. 138

Promotion	"Beijing 2008 Olympics Visa Promotion"
Eligibility	Any Philippine-issued Visa Debit, Visa Credit, and Visa Electron card, both principal and supplementary.
Promotion End:	15 January 2008
How to register:	There are two easy ways to register for the promotion: a.) SMS Registration Local transactions may be registered via SMS by texting VISA <name as it appears on card, first 6 digits of your card number, last 4 digits of your card number, amount of transaction, date of transaction, approval code> and send to 2361 for both Globe and Touch Mobile, and 325 for Smart. Make sure not to use commas when entering amounts more than 999.99. **Example: VISA JEN REYES,400000,1234,1000.25,111501,123456** b.) Online Registration For both overseas and local transactions, register online at www.visasupporters.com, click on "Philippines", then "Current Promos" to access the registration page.
Draws/Prizes	Weekly draws will be held starting 29 November, 2007 until 24 January, 2008, where a total of 750 limited edition Visa Olympic Games Memorabilia and one (1) Olympic Package will be given away each week. For the last two weekly draws, two (2) Olympic Packages will be given away each week.
For detailed information	For more information on the Visa - Beijing 2008 Olympics promotion, visit the Visa marketing website at www.visasupporters.com

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Donald Trump. Sr.
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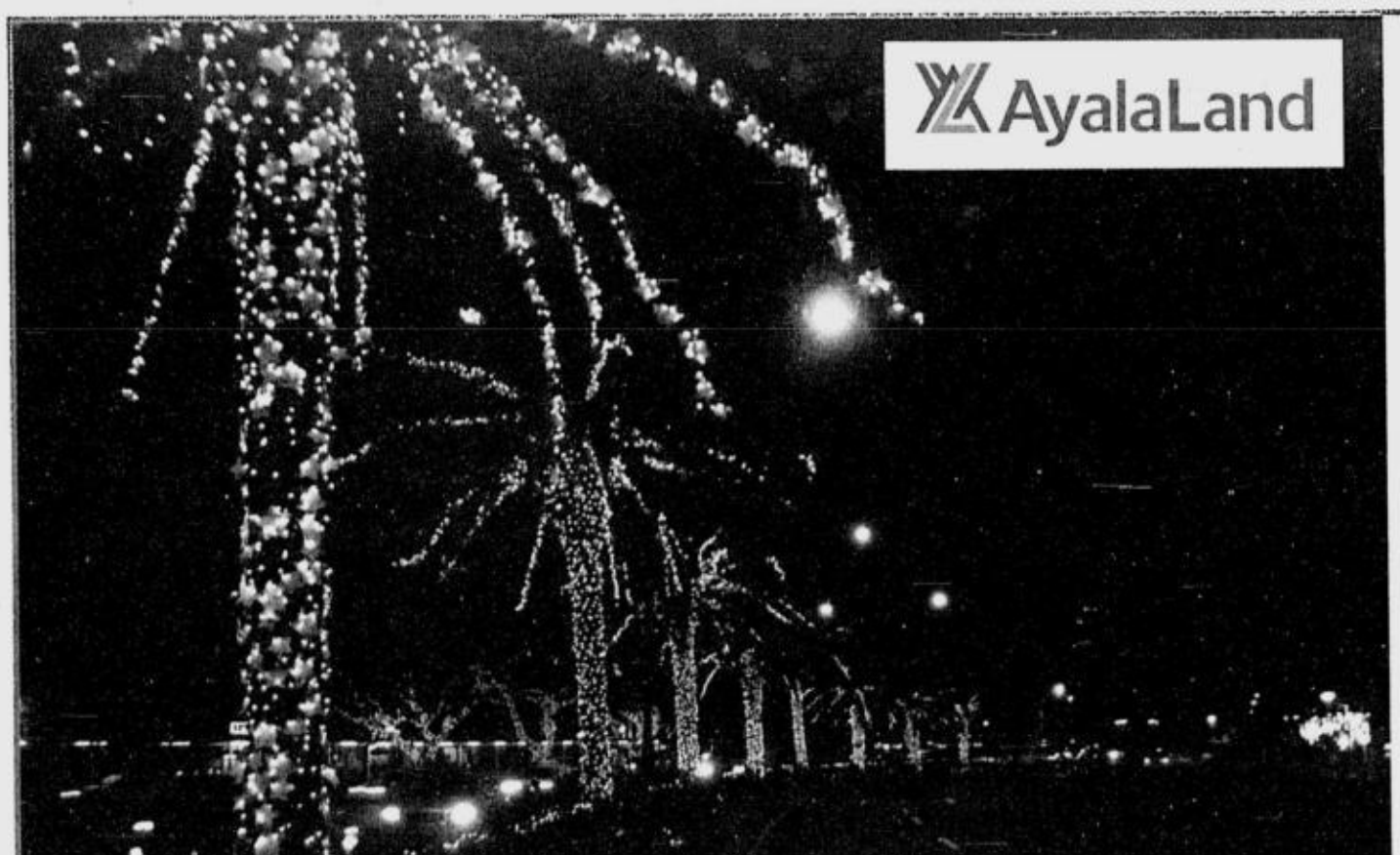
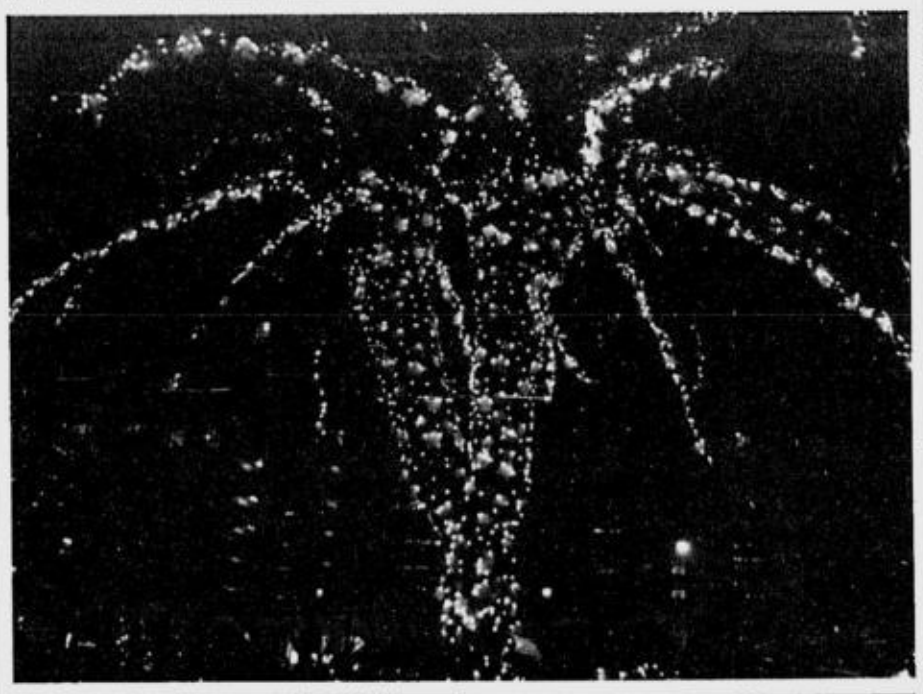
BE A PART OF THE 2BU CHRISTMAS SCRAPBOOK

Everyone has Christmas memories. We want to help share yours. Do you have Christmas stories, photos, articles, essays, poems, songs, scrapbook pages, journal entries, blog posts, old cards, letters and artworks that you want to be published in our pages? E-mail them to us at christmasscrapbook2007@gmail.com. Don't forget to add your name, age, school/office and contact info. The best contributions will be included in next week's 2bU!

ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO





A million stars inspire a million acts of kindness

For countless years now, the Makati-going public has looked forward to the Ayala Avenue Christmas décor. An annual effort of Ayala Land and with changing themes each time, it lights up the Makati Central Business District (MCBD) like a bright beacon of welcome. For a time, it was about competing for attention in terms of color and creativity when it comes to nativity scenes. Then it was about a new wave of lanterns adorning the streetlamps and tivoli lights dotting the trees and center islands.

This year, the MCBD is blanketed by a different light-one that is full of joy and hope. More than just about lighting up the city, this year's décor of a million miniature versions of the traditional white parol is all about inspiring acts of kindness befitting the season of giving.

Ayala Land's Miriam Katigbak, head of Signature Projects-Strategic Landbank Management Group which is responsible for such developments as Ayala Center, Bonfacio Global City, and Nuvali, posed a challenge that has never been done in the past to her team: to execute a Christmas effort that was about giving back to the community beyond a mere lighting aesthetic and instead, tieing this up as a full corporate effort across Ayala Land and all its subsidiaries, with the support of other corporate partners.

Now, there are a million white stars blanketing the main thoroughfares of the MCBD-along the stretch of Ayala Avenue from EDSA to Buendia, Makati Avenue from Paseo de Roxas to Pasay Road, and Paseo de Roxas from Makati Avenue to Ayala Avenue-all of which represent hope, joy, love, optimism, and the real meaning of Christmas.

Dubbed "A Million Christmas Stars," the little stars are meant to bring hope and light to the Christmas season for the underprivileged children supported by NGOs - the Kabalikat Buhay Foundation and Unang Hakbang Foundation, which were chosen as the beneficiaries of Ayala Land's Christmas project. Both organizations are engaged in helping street children and those living in poor urban communities through various programs in education and child welfare and support-a mission which is consistent with Ayala Land's vision to enrich lives through a lasting commitment to nation-building by promoting the betterment of the Filipino.

Kabalikat Buhay Foundation, headed by former Makati Mayor Dra. Elenita Binay, is an organization that provides various support activities to street children, orphans, and the needy. Likewise, Unang Hakbang Foundation has a nationwide effort to protect and provide for the needs of underprivileged children, specifically in the areas of rebuilding the children's self-esteem, improving their skills and assisting families in taking care of their children.

"The décor now has a deeper meaning and purpose befitting the season of Christmas, and it is one that every Makati resident or office worker can support and be proud of," shares Joel Luna, chief architect of Ayala Land and a member of the team that designed the decors. "During this Christmas season, everyone who will see the huge number of stars lining the streets will be struck not just by the decors, but also by the numerous acts of kindness that made the decors possible."

Through these Christmas stars, ALI integrated a fundraiser to consolidate corporate contribution within the mother company and its subsidiaries. ALI made a conscious effort to consolidate its annual corporate gift list to maximize proceeds for the two NGOs. A corporate Christmas card that features the street children of Makati on its cover design was also created. The children were photographed one Sunday morning along Ayala Avenue and around the Tower One and Exchange Plaza Building. Thus far, thousands of cards have been ordered by both corporate and individual sponsors. Proceeds from the sales of these cards were turned over to KBF and Unang Hakbang last November 5 during the simple lighting ceremonies held at the Tower One fountain area.

Both these efforts have inspired the Ayala Land management and staff to go beyond the glitter of Christmas and bring back the sparkle in the eyes of disadvantaged youth and adults. Companies such as Globe, Philippine Star, Jollibee and McCann Worldwide Group have seen the value of the project and also gave their valuable support. "We hope that the intent of integrating the spirit of giving with the décor would become a Christmas tradition for the Makati CBD," remarks Luna.

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

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Vertical Horizon charms local youth

VH PLAYS like a college rock band.

... as new Rivermaya presents a different act

By Pocholo Concepcion
Photos courtesy of MTV Philippines

FOR ANYONE WITH NO IDEA WHAT Vertical Horizon is, the band's recent MTV Philippines concert at the Araneta Coliseum was a good introduction.

Led by charismatic skinhead frontman Matt Scannell, VH played a steady, mid-tempo set of originals that sounded like college rock. Imagine REM's laid-back material but with Michael Stipe pronouncing his lyrics more clearly..

VH's songs are mostly about relationships, some of which ("When You Cry," "I'm Still Here") throbbed with pain and sadness—except that they ended on a note of optimism..

Positive attitude

VH views life's despair and desolation with a positive attitude. This became apparent as the next several songs came on, such as "Best I Ever Had" ("But it's not so bad ...") and "Send It Up" ("I'm all right, by the way ...").

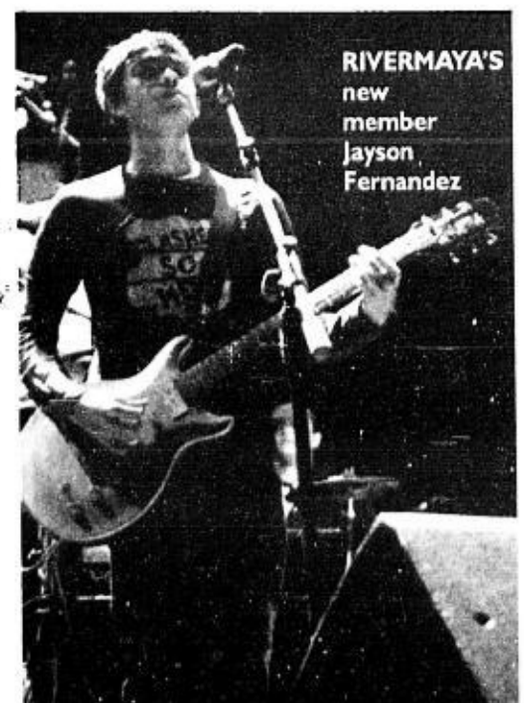
Its most famous composition, "Everything You Want," was not exactly about a happy situation, but sounded like the speaker was bent on winning his romantic pursuit.

Described as alternative rock, VH's guitar-driven music moved placidly on a steady rhythm. The band played with hardly any rough edges.

JAMIE KENNEDY

Lead vocalist Scannell changed guitars after every few songs and sang in a rich, warm tone. Audience response bordered on adulation. We were at our wits' end, wondering how the band could achieve such popularity with practically no radio exposure, until we noticed that its fans were

VERTICAL/ F4



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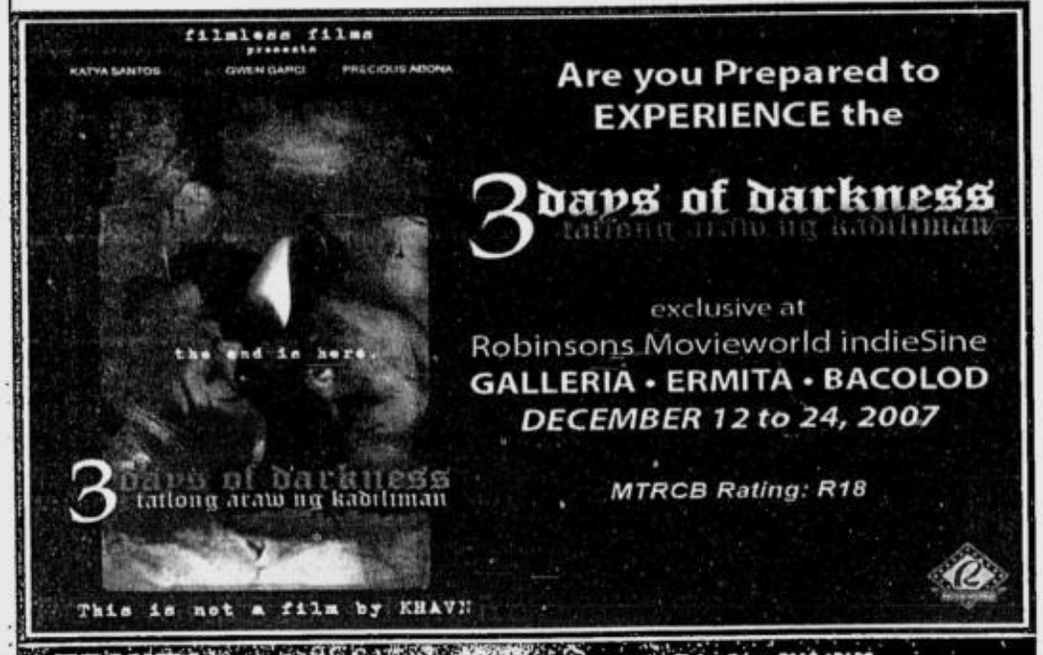
4 BATANES	9 HITMAN
5 GRINDHOUSE: DEATH PROOF	10 BEOWULF



ERMITA

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1 GRINDHOUSE: DEATH PROOF	6 ONE MORE CHANCE
2 indieSine: 3 DAYS of DARKNESS	7 HITMAN
3 BEOWULF	1 BATANES
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5 PASUKOB	3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS

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1 ELIZABETH: GOLDEN AGE	5 EASTERN PROMISES
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3 CATACOMBS	7 HOOD of HORROR
4 GRINDHOUSE: DEATH PROOF	8 BATANES

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1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	3 BATANES
2 HOOD of HORROR	4 PASUKOB

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2 ELIZABETH: GOLDEN AGE	4 PASUKOB

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2 BATANES
3 HITMAN
4 BOOGEYMAN 2
5 THE NANNY DIARIES

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2 GHOST SON
3 HOOD of HORROR
4 BATANES

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1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
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3 HOOD of HORROR
4 BATANES

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1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 FRED CLAUS
3 WE OWN THE NIGHT
4 THE KINGDOM

TARLAC

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 LIONS FOR LAMBS
3 ENCHANTED

STARMILLS

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3 WE OWN THE NIGHT	6 BATANES

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3 MR. MAGORIUM's WONDER EMPORIUM
4 THE KINGDOM
5 RENDITION
6 indieSine: 3 DAYS of DARKNESS

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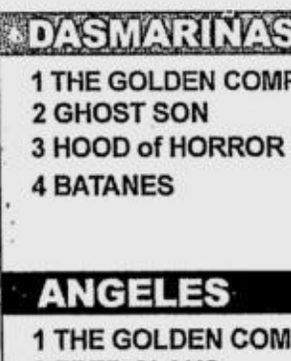
Ticket Price: P70.50 / P80.50 (033) 338-8070

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 HITMAN
3 FRED CLAUS
4 MR. MAGORIUM's WONDER EMPORIUM
5 BOOGEYMAN 2
6 GAME PLAN



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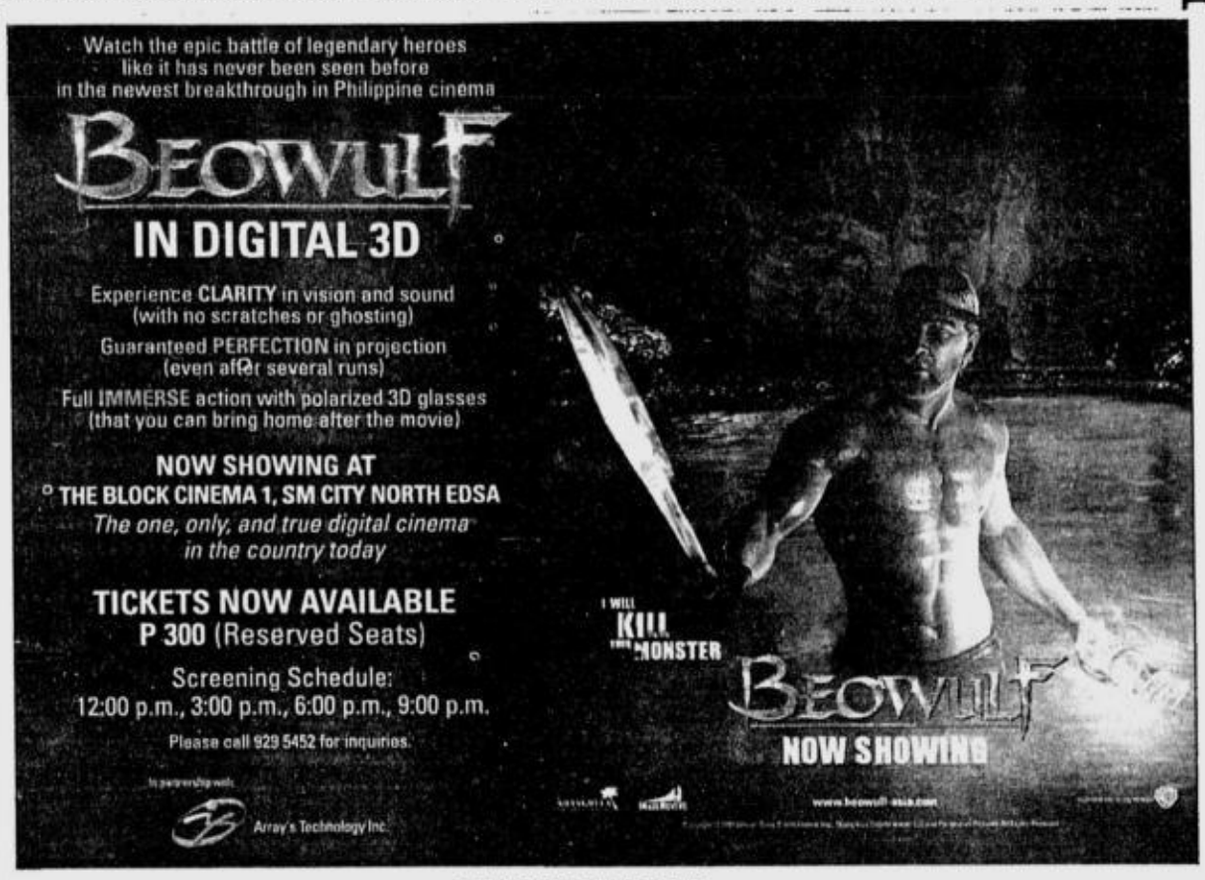

METRO MANILA

SM MALL OF ASIA 556-0104

IMAX

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DEEP SEA 3D: 2:00 PM
T-REX: 10:00 AM

1 ELIZABETH
2 CATACOMB
3 DEATH PROOF
4 SHIRI/ ENCHANTED
5 BATANES
6 ONE MORE CHANCE

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1 BEOWULF (DIGITAL 3D)
2 THE KINGDOM
3 BATANES
4 HITMAN
5 PASUKOB
6 ELIZABETH
7 GOLDEN COMPASS
8 CATACOMB
9 SHIRI/ VHAGETS
10 DEATH PROOF
11 ONE MORE CHANCE
12 ENCHANTED

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901

1 ELIZABETH
2 BEOWULF
3 GOLDEN COMPASS
4 ONE MORE CHANCE
5 SHIRI
6 BATANES
7 VHAGETS
8 CATACOMB
9 HITMAN
10 PASUKOB
11 DEATH PROOF
12 ENCHANTED

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749

1 EASTERN PROMISES
2 ENCHANTED
3 PASUKOB
4 HITMAN
5 ONE MORE CHANCE
6 SHIRI
7 GOLDEN COMPASS
8 BATANES
9 BEOWULF
10 THE KINGDOM
11 DEATH PROOF
12 VHAGETS

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055

1 DEATH PROOF
2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3 BATANES
4 PASUKOB

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488

1 DEATH PROOF
2 ELIZABETH
3 GOLDEN COMPASS
4 SHIRI/ PASUKOB
5 CATACOMB
6 ONE MORE CHANCE

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975

1 BATANES
2 DEATH PROOF
3 GOLDEN COMPASS
4 PASUKOB

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 BATANES
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 ELIZABETH
5 PASUKOB
6 DEATH PROOF
7 SHIRI
8 CATACOMB
9 VHAGETS

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416

1 GOLDEN COMPASS
2 DEATH PROOF
3 ELIZABETH
4 CATACOMB
5 BATANES
6 SHIRI/ BEOWULF
7 ONE MORE CHANCE
8 VHAGETS/ PASUKOB
9 THE KINGDOM
10 EASTERN PROMISES

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1 BATANES
2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3 ELIZABETH
4 PASUKOB

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240

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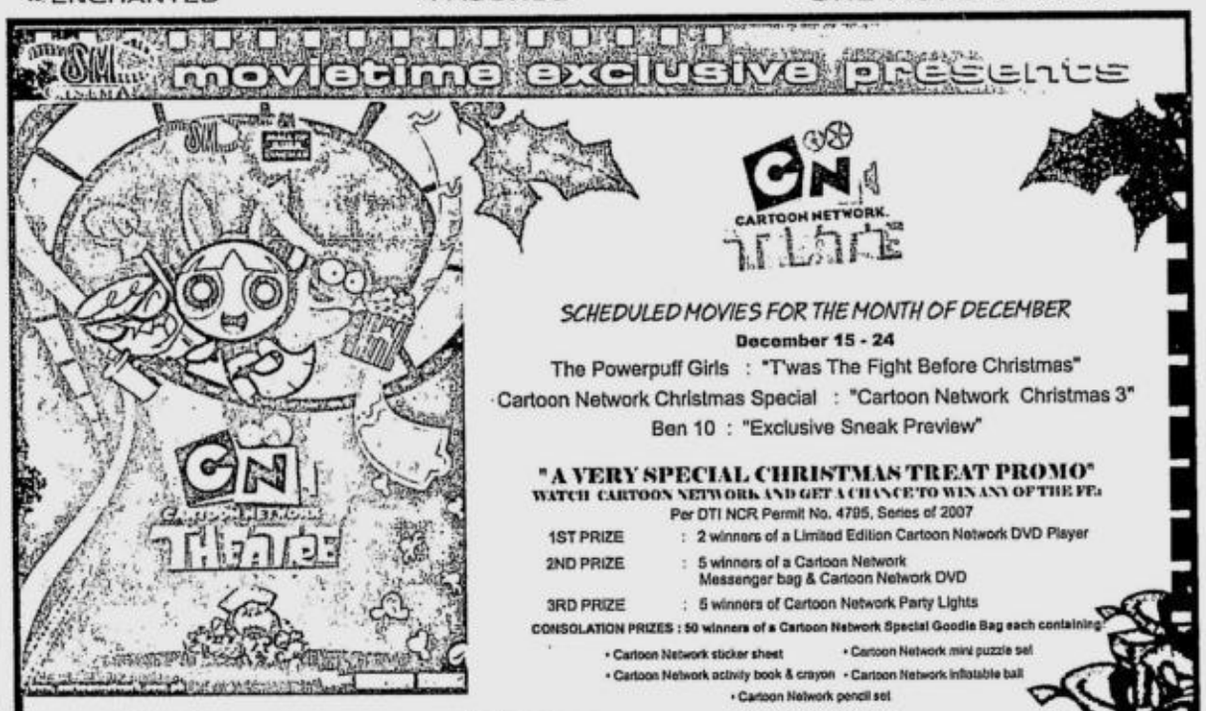
2 CATACOMB
3 BATANES
4 ONE MORE CHANCE
5 DEATH PROOF
6 ELIZABETH
7 SHIRI
8 THE KINGDOM
9 PASUKOB
10 BEOWULF
11 HITMAN
12 ENCHANTED

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917

1 GOLDEN COMPASS
2 BATANES
3 PASUKOB
4 ONE MORE CHANCE



SM CITY BACOOR (046)417-3868

1 HITMAN
2 ENCHANTED
3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
4 ONE MORE CHANCE
5 BATANES
6 PASUKOB
7 SHIRI
8 EASTERN PROMISES

SM CITY MARILAO (044)9332013-17

1 GOLDEN COMPASS
2 NANNY DIARIES
3 BATANES
4 HITMAN

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO (046)474-3160

1 BATANES
2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 PASUKOB

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4323201-04

1 THE GAME PLAN
2 MR. MAGORIUM'S WONDER EMPORIUM
3 PASUKOB
4 THE GOLDEN COMPASS

SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998

1 HITMAN
2 THE GAMEPLAN
3 SHIRI
4 RENDITION
5 THE KINGDOM
6 GOLDEN COMPASS

SM CAGAYAN DE ORO (088)859-2884

1 THE KINGDOM
2 PASUKOB
3 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
4 GOLDEN COMPASS

LUZON

NOW OPEN

SM CITY TAYTAY 286-2502 to 04

1 PASUKOB
2 BATANES
3 GOLDEN COMPASS

SM CITY LIPA (043) 784-0187

1 PASUKOB/ ONE MORE CHANCE
2 HITMAN
3 GOLDEN COMPASS
4 MR. MAGORIUM'S WONDER EMPORIUM

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)9037681-85

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 SHIRI
3 THE KINGDOM
4 VHAGETS
5 BATANES
6 PASUKOB

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5349811

1 THE GAME PLAN/ LIONS FOR LAMS
2 HITMAN
3 GOLDEN COMPASS
4 PASUKOB

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422

1 NANNY DIARIES
2 RESERVED
3 SHIRI
4 GOLDEN COMPASS
5 HITMAN
6 THE GAMEPLAN
7 RESERVED
8 FRED CLAUSE

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80

1 GOLDEN COMPASS
2 ONE MORE CHANCE
3 PASUKOB
4 LIONS FOR LAMBS

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6197838-39

1 HITMAN
2 SHIRI
3 THE GAME PLAN
4 GOLDEN COMPASS

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45

1 GOLDEN COMPASS
2 THE KINGDOM
3 THE GAMEPLAN
4 BOOGEYMAN 2
5 PASUKOB
6 BATANES/ FRED CALUSE

SM CITY BATANGAS 885-6401-04

1 HITMAN
2 PASUKOB
3 GOLDEN COMPASS
4 UNREST

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876

1 RESERVED
2 GOLDEN COMPASS
3 EASTERN PROMISES
4 THE GAMEPALN
5 FRED CLAUSE
6 VHAGETS
7 UNREST
8 SHIRI

SM CITY BACOLOD (034) 708 1010

1 HITMAN
2 GOLDEN COMPASS
3 MR. MAGORIUM'S WONDER EMPORIUM
4 RENDITION

SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

*FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MOVIE LISTING, MTRCB RATING, SCREENING SCHEDULES AND THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA

ROUNDUP

DIRECTOR Ang Lee, center, is flanked by actress Tang Wei and actor-singer Wang Lee-hom. REUTERS

7 wins for 'Lust, Caution'

TAIPEI, TAIWAN—TAIWAN SHOWERED native son Ang Lee with honors Saturday as his spy thriller "Lust, Caution" dominated the Golden Horse Awards in Taipei, clinching seven prizes, including Best Film, Director and Actor.

Lee used the occasion to speak out about the plight of his home island in unusually political comments.

In accepting the award for Taiwanese Filmmaker of the Year, the Oscar-winning director said, "I feel very warm in the heart to receive everyone's affirmation." *AP*

GMA bags CMMA honors

GMA Network bagged six awards and a citation in the recently held 29th Catholic Mass Media Awards.

Among the programs included in the winners' circle are: "24 Oras," Best News Program; "Philippine Agenda" for Best Adult Educational Program; "Wish Ko Lang," Best Public Service Program; and "Kapuso Mo Jessica Soho," which shared the spotlight with ABS-CBN's "The Correspondents" in the Best Magazine Program category.

"Mga Kwento ni Lola Basyang" and "Magpakailanman" bested the other entries for the Best Children's Program and Best Drama Program trophy.

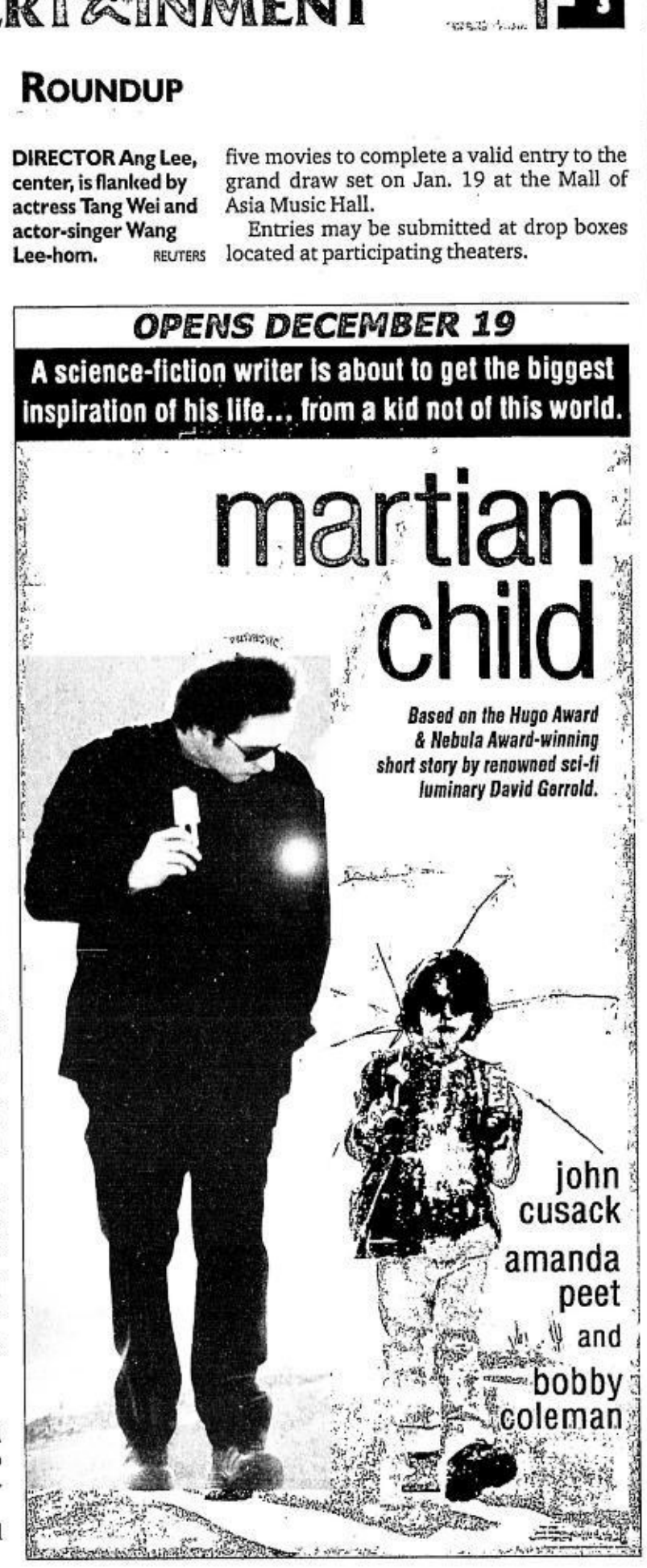
The network was also given the special citation for Best Public Service Advertisement via its election advocacy campaign, "Sa Isa Kong Boto."

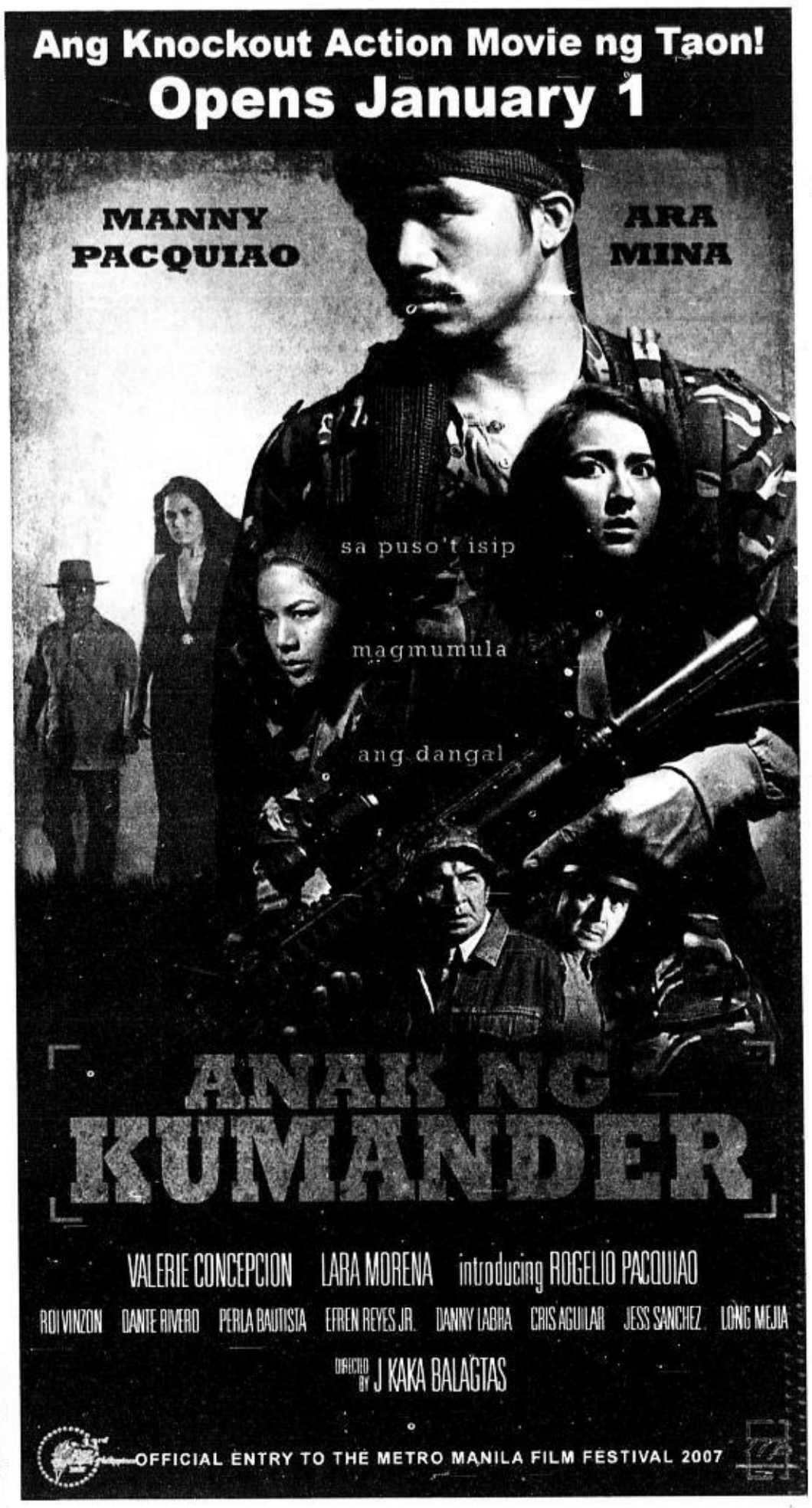
Film fest promo

Patrons of the Metro Manila Film Festival Philippines (MMFFP) will get the chance to win up to P100,000 in the "Cash sa Pelikula" raffle promo.

Participants must have at least watched five movies to complete a valid entry to the grand draw set on Jan. 19 at the Mall of Asia Music Hall.

Entries may be submitted at drop boxes located at participating theaters.





AT THE CINEMAS

THX

Reserve your tickets by texting SURESEATS GB3 or SURESEATS G4 to 2333 (Globe) or 211 (Smart) or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.
Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification, please call 729-7777

GLORIETTA 1	1 CATACOMB	2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	3 HOOD OF HORROR	4 HITMAN
GLORIETTA 4	1 ENCHANTED	2 THE KINGDOM	3 THX ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 GONE BABY GONE	5 BATANES	6 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	7 DEATH PROOF
GREENBELT 1	1 PAPER DOLLS		2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	
GREENBELT 3	1 THX THE GOLDEN COMPASS GUARANTEED SEATS		2 THX ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE GUARANTEED SEATS	
	3 DEATH PROOF GUARANTEED SEATS	4 GONE BABY GONE GUARANTEED SEATS	5 EASTERN PROMISES GUARANTEED SEATS	
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX THE GOLDEN COMPASS		2 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN COMPASS	
	3 DEATH PROOF	4 CATACOMB	5 THE KINGDOM	
AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	2 THE GAME PLAN	3 FRED CLAUS	4 EASTERN PROMISES
MARKET! MARKET!	1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS		2 DEATH PROOF	
	3 HOOD OF HORROR	4 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE	5 CATACOMB	
TRINOMA • THX Certified • All-Digital Sound • All-Stadium Seating • Computerized Ticketing System • Recliner Seats	1 BATANES	2 DEATH PROOF	3 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE GUARANTEED SEATS	4 HOOD OF HORROR GUARANTEED SEATS
	5 ENCHANTED	6 CATACOMB	7 THX THE GOLDEN COMPASS GUARANTEED SEATS	

AT THE MALLS

Ayala

CONCIERGE HOTLINE NUMBERS:
Glorietta - 752 7272
Greenbelt - 757 4853 to 54
Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; 772 1860
Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc. 324
Market! Market! - 886 7519
TriNoma - 901 3000

glorietta
Philippine Madrigal Singers
with Robert Seña and Isay Alvarez
December 8; 6pm; Glorietta 4 Park

GREENBELT
The Dawn Jazz Nights
December 5; 7:30pm; Greenbelt 2 Al Fresco Area

ALABANG TOWN CENTER
Southern Musicians Concert
December 9; 5pm; Town Plaza

AYALA CENTER CEBU
FREE Christmas Gift Bag for every P500 worth of purchase.
See leaflets for details. Per DTI-Cebu Permit No. 584, Series of 2007
December 1 to 31

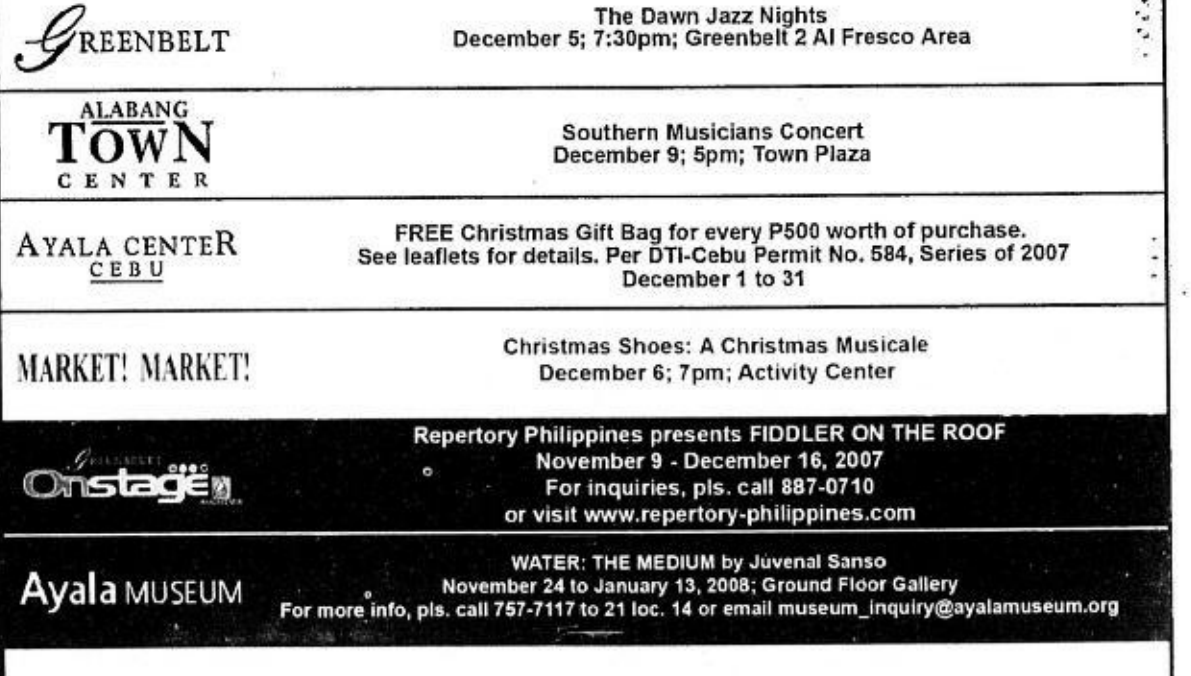
MARKET! MARKET!
Christmas Shoes: A Christmas Musicale
December 6; 7pm; Activity Center

Onstage
Repertory Philippines presents FIDDLER ON THE ROOF
November 9 - December 16, 2007
For inquiries, pls. call 887-0710
or visit www.repertory-philippines.com

Ayala MUSEUM
WATER: THE MEDIUM by Juvenal Sanso
November 24 to January 13, 2008; Ground Floor Gallery
For more info, pls. call 757-7117 to 21 loc. 14 or email museum_inquiry@ayalamuseum.org

TriNoma
Christmas Chorale featuring Martin Nievera
December 6; 6pm; Activity Center

Rhythm Academy: Sam Concepcion with the Augustinian Larks
December 9; 6pm; Activity Center



glorietta GREENBELT ALABANG TOWN CENTER AYALA CENTER CEBU MARKET! MARKET! TriNoma

MMTA
METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING

SHANG CINEPLEX
1 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE
2 (2D) THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3 (DTS) ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE
4 THE KINGDOM / THE KINGDOM
PREMIERE
(DTS) GRIND HOUSE : DEATH PROOF

Marsagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
1 THE KINGDOM
2 THE GOLDENT COMPASS
3 HOOD OF HORROR

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449348)
1 HITMAN
2 THE GOLDENT COMPASS

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 (DOLBY) THE GOLDENT COMPASS
2 BATANES
3 (DTS EX) THE KINGDOM
4 FRED CLAUS

CINEMA 2000
Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216
1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE
3 HOOD OF HORROR
4 THE KINGDOM

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 BEOWULF
2 THE GOLDENT COMPASS

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72
1 (DOLBY) ENCHANTED
2 (DOLBY) THE GOLDENT COMPASS
3 (DOLBY) ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE
4 (DOLBY) GRINDHOUSE: DEATH PROOF

stармall
EDSA cor. SHAW
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7268160
3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) HOOD OF HORROR
5

metropolis star cinema
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504285, 5433994
1 HOOD OF HORROR
2 BATANES
3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
4 THE KINGDOM

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
2 (DTS) HITMAN
3 (DOLBY) THE GOLDENT COMPASS
4

THEATRES
NE Pacific Mall Cabanatuan
Telephone No. (044) 600-3025
1 ENCHANTED
2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3 HITMAN

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146
1 RESERVED
2 (DOLBY) RESERVED
3 (DTS) RESERVED
4 RESERVED

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-5271
1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 BATANES
3
4

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 BEOWULF
2 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
3 (DOLBY) THE GOLDEN COMPASS

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 BATANES
2 ENCHANTED
3 (DOLBY) THE GOLDEN COMPASS
4 (DTS) PLEASE CALL

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 (DTS) HOOD OF HORROR
2 (DTS) THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3 GRINDHOUSE: DEATH PROOF
4 (DTS DTS) ENCHANTED
5 (DTS DOLBY) HITMAN
6 (DTS DTS) ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE
7 (DTS DOLBY) CATACOMBS
8 (DTS) RESERVED
9 (DTS) ONE MORE CHANCE
10 (DTS) BATANES / PASUKOB

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 BEDWULF
2 GAME PLAN
3 (DOLBY) THE GOLDEN COMPASS

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736
1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 BEOWULF

Blue Wave MANSION
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sta. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927
1 (DOLBY) HOOD OF HORROR
2 (DOLBY) BATANES
3 (DOLBY) THE GOLDENT COMPASS
4 (DOLBY)

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 BATANES
2 ONE MORE CHANCE

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 (DTS) HOOD OF HORROR
2 BATANES
3 PLEASE CALL
4 (DTS) PLEASE CALL

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 (DOLBY) THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 PLEASE CALL
3 (DTS) HITMAN
4 BATANES
5 30 DAYS OF NIGHT

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto tel 7334228
1 (DOLBY) RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 THE GOLDENT COMPASS
5 HOOD OF HORROR

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 HITMAN
3 GAME PLAN
4 BOOGEYMAN - 2

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 ENCHANTED
2 HOOD OF HORROR
3 BATANES
4

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 PLEASE CALL
2

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

SHANG CINEPLEX
1 ELIZABETH MTRCB. PG-13
3 ELIZABETH MTRCB. PG-13
2 GOLDEN COMPASS MTRCB. PG-13
4 ENCHANTED MTRCB. GP / THE KINGDOM MTRCB. R-13
PREMIERE THEATRE — DEATH PROOF MTRCB. R-13
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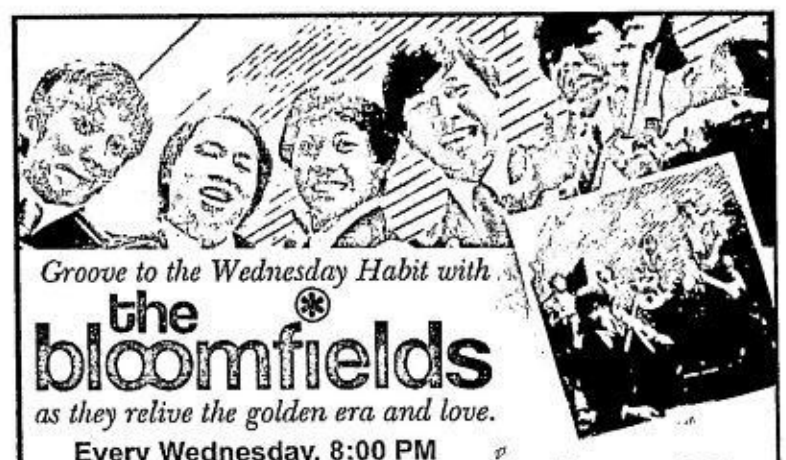

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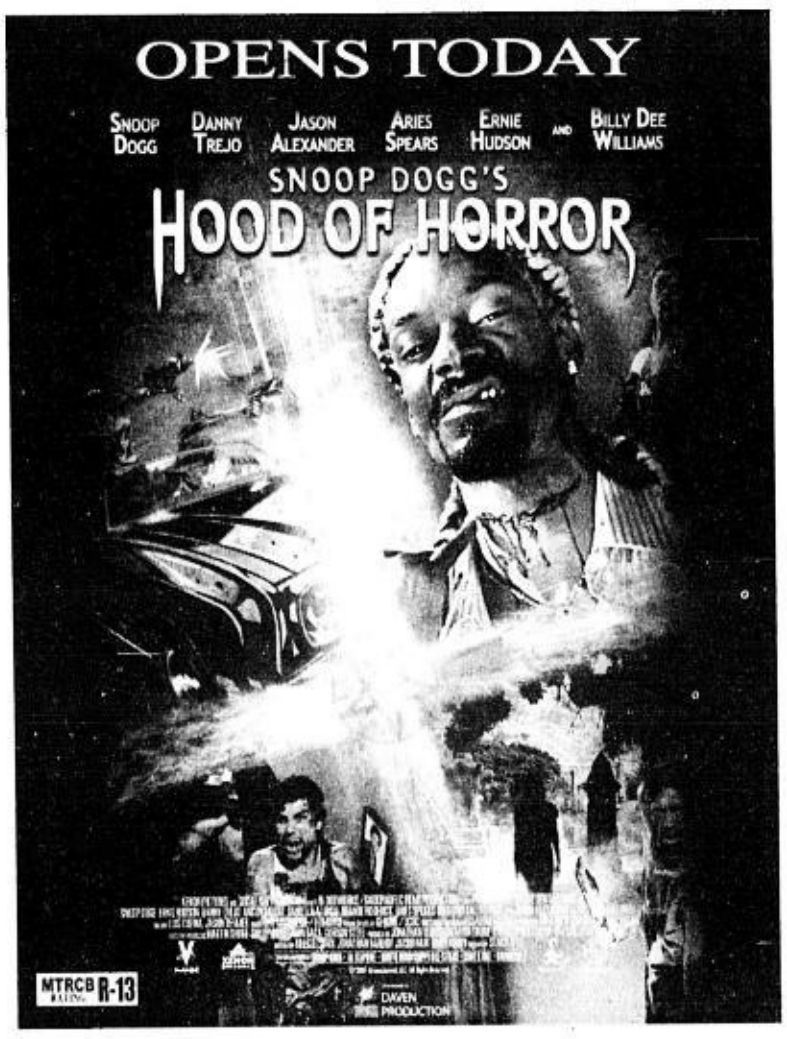

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX
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E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave. (C-5) Quezon City
To receive Eastwood City Events, Promos and Cinema schedule just text eastwood and send to 2948 for Globe, Smart & Sun Cellular subscribers
For inquiries, call:
687-6963
GUARANTEED SEATS
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

1 ENCHANTED
2:35, 5:15, 7:55, 10:35
G

2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2:40, 5:20, 8:00, 10:35
PG-13

3 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE
2:00, 4:50, 7:40, 10:30
PG-13

4 GRINDHOUSE: DEATH PROOF
3:15, 5:40, 8:05, 10:30
R-13

Araneta Center araneta center.net | Gateway | NIMALL | FarmersPlaza | Farmers Market
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ELIZABETH	CATACOMB	DEATH PROOF	BEOWULF	ELIZABETH
1:05 | 3:55 6:45 | 9:30	2:10 | 4:25 6:40 | 9:00	12:50 | 3:00 5:10 | 7:20 | 9:30	4:20 | 9:20	12:30 | 3:20 6:10 | 9:00

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GOLDEN COMPASS	ONE MORE CHANCE	THE KINGDOM	BATANES 4:20 | 9:20 PASUKOB 1:50 | 6:50	ENCHANTED
2:00 | 4:30 7:00 | 9:30	12:45 | 3:40 6:35 | 9:30	2:10 | 6:40		1:45 | 4:20 6:55 | 9:30

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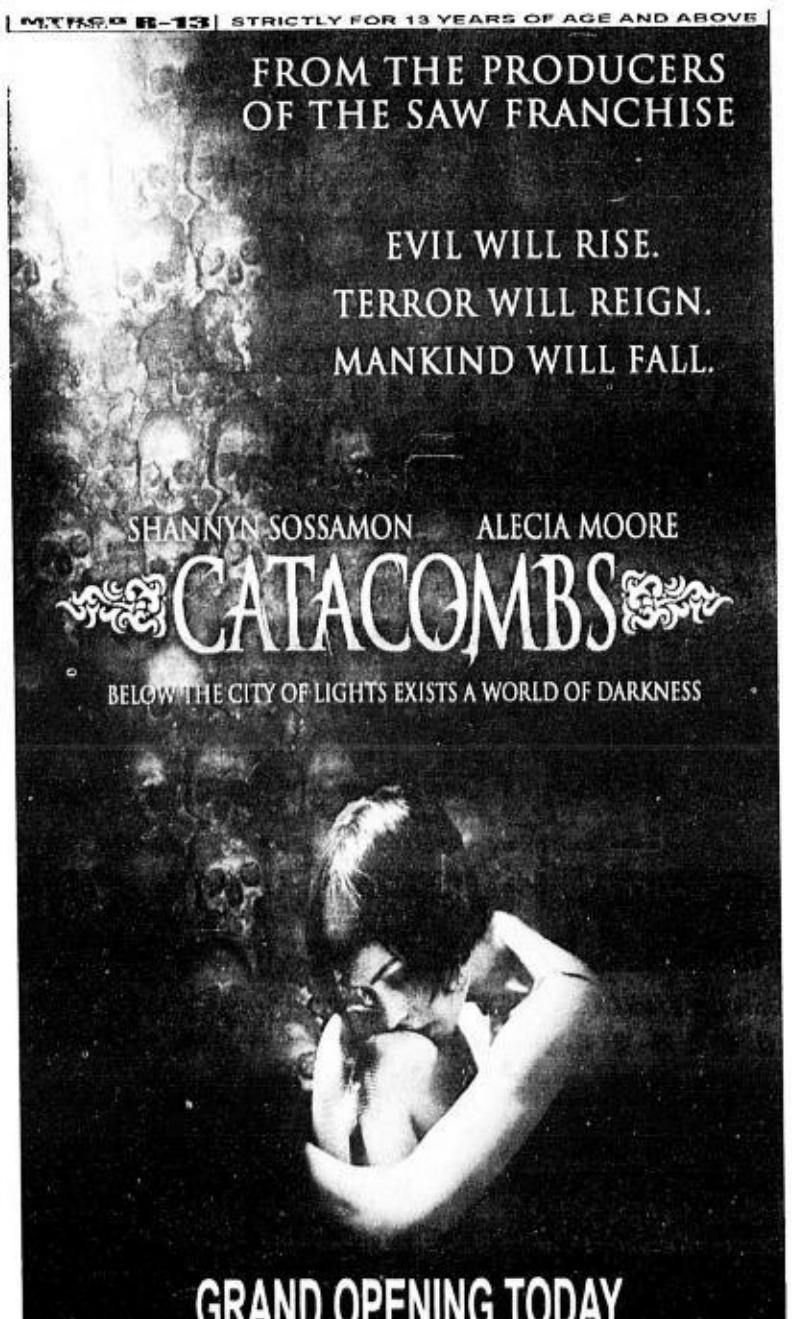
GREENHILLS CINEMAS
THEATRE-MALL GREENHILLS
NOW SHOWING
CINEMA 1: CATACOMBS 11:00, 1:20, 3:40 6:00, 8:20, 10:35 R-13
CINEMA 2: THE KINGDOM 11:00, 1:20, 3:40 6:00, 8:20, 10:35 R-13
DOLBY DIGITAL
PROMENADE GREENHILLS
NOW SHOWING
CINEMA 3: DEATHPROOF 11:40, 2:25, 5:10 7:55, 10:35 R-13
CINEMA 4: THE GOLDEN COMPASS 11:00, 1:20, 3:40 6:00, 8:20, 10:35 GP
CINEMA 5: ELIZABETH 11:15, 2:10, 5:00 7:50, 10:35 PG-13
TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722 4496.

MUSIC MUSEUM	December 14, 2007	Mark Herras	8:00 PM
	December 15, 2007	The Company	8:00 PM
	December 19, 2007	Pilita Corales, Dulce, Malu Barry	8:30 PM
	December 28, 2007	Pooh	8:00 PM
TEATRINO PROMENADE GREENHILLS	December 20, 2007	Jed Madela	8:00 PM
	December 28 & 29, 2007	Drag - Ons	10:00 PM

FOR INQUIRIES PLS. CALL 722-4532 LOC 116



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TIME
"IT'S SMART. A TIGHTLY WOUND THRILLER THAT KEEPS YOU GUESSING."
Rolling Stone
★★★★ CASEY AFFLECK RUNS WITH HIS BREAKTHROUGH ROLE."
Los Angeles Times
"AMY RYAN GIVES A VIBRANT, KNOCKOUT PERFORMANCE."
Newsday
"BEN AFFLECK'S DIRECTORIAL DEBUT IS RICHLY RENDERED. AMY RYAN IS A REVELATION."
LARRY KING
"ONE OF THE BEST MOVIES I'VE SEEN IN YEARS."
CASEY AFFLECK MICHELLE MONAGHAN MORGAN FREEMAN ED HARRIS
GONE BABY GONE
gonebabygone-themovie.com
MIRAMAX
BASED ON THE NOVEL FROM THE ACCLAIMED AUTHOR OF MYSTIC RIVER
MTRCB Rating: Restricted 13 (R-13)
gloriette GREENBELT

Vertical...

From page F1

mostly from the MTV-hooked 1990s generation.

Earlier, Rivermaya presented an entirely new act, with guitarist Mike Elgar, bassist Japs Sergio and drummer Mark Escueta doing lead vocals on some songs.

New member Jayson Fernandez handled the pressure very well, and the good thing was he didn't try to sound like Bamboo or Rico Blanco.

Standup comic Jamie Kennedy improvised on jokes Pinoys could relate to, such as the one about calamities the country has plenty of—typhoons, earthquakes and "karaoke."

ENTERTAINMENT

E-mail: entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

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inquirer ent name/age/city/message
to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Pynocare 4G Actisome

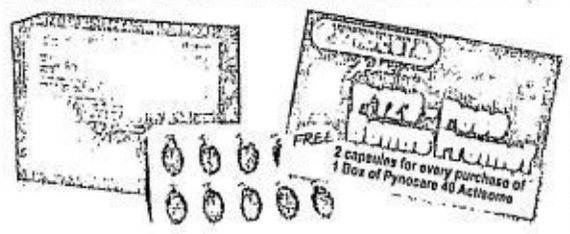
"PEKAS" FACTS

"Pekas" clinically known as Melasma appears as irregularly, shaped grey-brown or dark-brown patches on facial skin. Most often it appears on both sides of the face usually seen on cheeks, forehead, nose-bridge, upper lip and jaw lines.

Face with Pekas or Melasma

Pynocare 4G Actisome, the First Safe and Effective Oral Medicine for Pekas, treats pekas with its MSCC (Melasma Skin Clear Complexion) Complex formulation. It deactivates free radicals and acts immediately on hyperactive melanocytes (melanin-producing skin cell) controlling overproduction of melanin in the skin cell. Thus resulting to lightening of PEKAS and prevents recurrence.

Just 2 capsules a day for at least 8 weeks and Be PEKAS-FREE



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MARIAN Rivera

'Marimar' wows Pinoys in the US

DINGDONG DANTES STILL HAS A HANGover from their successful "Marimar" US tour. "It's funny and amazing that Pinoys in America seem to be more into our *teleserye* than people back here," he notes. "They traveled from different States just to see us."

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

Dong's supporters will surely come in full force again when he holds a thanksgiving party at his and GF **Karylle**'s Centerstage, a coffee shop cum KTV. He will be giving away 1 million worth of prizes.

Christmas bells are now ringing, Ding Dong, Ding Dong, heralding his generosity.

Marimar's jewels

Marian Rivera aka Marimar deserves nothing less than top-of-the-line jewelry to wear on her top-rating *teleserye*. That's why on her supposed wedding day to Rodolfo San Genis (Marvin Agustin), Marimar was wearing Miladay Jewels' "Tropical Fantasy." "That particular piece of 22 South Sea pearls, multi-carat diamonds with 18-K white gold chains bundled together won first prize in the formal category at the prestigious Philippine Fine Jewelry Design Competition in 2006," says **Christine Dayrit**, Miladay VP for marketing. Even Cruzita (**Francheska Salcedo**) and Sergio (Dingdong Dantes) use blings from the multi-awarded jewelry store.

The two big "M's" go together well. Marimar and Miladay... Mmmm! Eye and ear/neck candy.

Birthday concert

Being a longtime friend of **Pops Fernandez**, I couldn't help but get emotional when she cried during her silver anniversary concert at the Big Dome. While her glam shots were being flashed on the video screens, memories of all we've been through together played in my mind.

The most touching part was when she sang her signature song, "Dito." Before singing it, she said, "This song is for a very special man who I wish were here. If he could see me now, I hope he'll be proud of me." For a while everyone thought she was referring to **Martin Nievera** until pics of her late dad (**Eddie Fernandez**) were shown.

Despite the rift Pops has with Martin, she still acknowledged the big role he played in her career and her life. She sang some love songs from their "Penthouse Live" days.

It was so endearing when she said, "These songs which Martin and I used to duet with, *pwede naman palang kantahin ng mag-isa. Dadaanin ko na lang sa* outfit." It only goes to show that she's not bitter anymore towards her estranged husband. Then a voice that sounded very much like Martin suddenly sang along with her. "*Natakot kayo 'no*?" she remarked in jest. "*Ako din eh* (laughs)!"

It turned out to be her back-up singer. Pipay can now look back and look ahead with

'MARIMAR'/ G3

OPENING TODAY

Elizabeth: The Golden Age

Stars Cate Blanchett, Clive Owen, Geoffrey Rush, Samantha Morton

Directed by Shekhar Kapur

This sequel to the 1998 epic drama "Elizabeth" finds the Virgin Queen (Blanchett) battling with the Spanish Armada and ro-

OPENING/ G2

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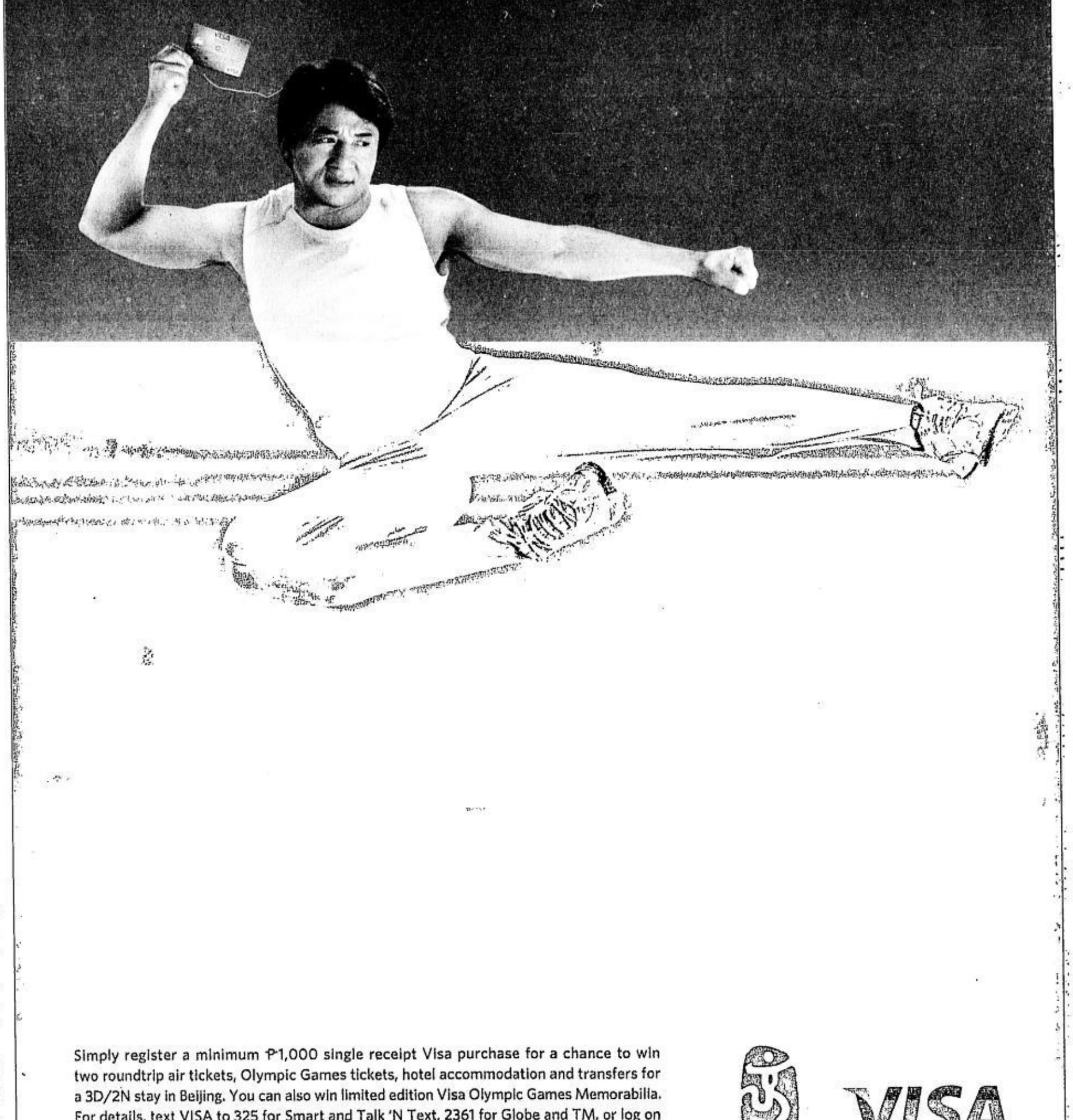

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Bollywood exec: I definitely want to shoot here

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CLARK FREEPORT—FUN+ASIA Entertainment Studios Philippines Inc. toured eight Bollywood filmmakers and producers in Clark on Sunday to promote the economic zone and its twin center, the Subic Bay Freeport, as movie locations or production headquarters.

Philippine Ambassador to India Marita Jimenez, who accompanied the group, said this was the first batch of foreign film industry leaders to come and check out the Philippines.

"There's a second Bollywood group that's coming in January. By April, we will have the Hollywood group," Jimenez told the INQUIRER.

Those who attended a briefing were representatives of the Bollywood firms Maverick Productions, Bohra Brothers Entertainment Co., Popcorn Motion Pictures and Compressor Film, as well as India's tourism and housing security officials.

Jimenez said the renewed interest in the Philippines as a "filmmaker's haven" was a result of President Macapagal-Arroyo's recent visit to India.

"The California State is the 19th top economy in the world and the entertainment industry contributes largely to that. President Arroyo wants Filipinos to be part of that industry," she said.

Ashok Narendral Bohra of Bohra Brothers said the company was "exploring, but I definitely want to shoot in your country."

"There's a wide breadth of location. These add up to production value," Compressor Film's Tomas Puig said.

Movie setting

In her presentation, Catherine May Jimenez, Fun+Asia vice president and chief operations officer, said that in past years, several Hollywood outfits had used the Philippines for movie settings.

But "everything entertainment is now in the Philippines" through Fun+Asia, she said.

This joint venture of Viva International Pictures, Philippine Films and Brains International Corp. is developing Clark and Subic to be "Asia's first entertainment production enclave with strategic freeport incentives" to make it the "Hollywood of Asia."

The country's major come-ons are its most competitive production cost, vast and versatile shooting locations, abundant local talents and entertainment craftsmen, hospitable English-speaking population, multi-industry support facilities and nearness to other places in the Asia-Pacific region.

Doing business in Clark and Subic also comes with zero-taxes or tax holidays, including advanced basic utilities, international amenities and easy access through international airports and seaports that offer regular or charter flight services.

Aside from the Expo Pilipino, the foreign filmmakers visited nearby lahar landscapes that Mount Pinatubo left on the heels of its 1991 eruptions.

Pure expression, not kung fu

By The INQUIRER and INQUIRER.NET Entertainment Staff

EVER WONDERED ABOUT Bamboo's signature moves onstage? Put all speculations to rest.

Rushes asked the soft-spoken, polo shirt- and collared tee-wearing Pinoy rock star about those moves that, if the volume were turned off while he made the kind of music that he did, would pass off as a martial arts routine.

"No, it's not [kung fu or tai chi]," he said, as he waited his turn on stage during the INQUIRER's anniversary party on Saturday. We might add that this was said calmly, while he sat as though in a sound-proof bubble, oblivious to the goings-on.

We've seen him do this more than once—create that bubble around him right before taking the mic and rocking the joint, wherever it may be.

Last Saturday, for a steaming half hour, no one could tell it was the PDI covered car park.

BAMBOO
Mañalac of Bamboo
ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

Led Zep fever

LONDON—Led Zeppelin fans queued for hours Sunday to get tickets for the iconic band's one-off comeback gig, amid tight security.

More than a million people applied for the tickets to Monday's gig, but only 20,000 lucky names were pulled out of a secret ballot to attend the band's first show in 19 years—and, in theory, their last.

To avoid resale on eBay and other such auction outlets, the organizers required all those successful to personally come to the O2 arena in southeast London, showing photo IDs to pick up their tickets.

They were given a sealed wristband which could not be taken off until after the gig Monday evening (early yesterday in Manila).

Frontman Robert Plant, guitarist Jimmy Page and bass player John Paul Jones will be joined by Jason Bonham, the son of their late drummer John, whose booze-fueled death in 1980 triggered the band's premature demise.

Now in their 60s, the band members have promised to pull out all the stops for the one-off show, vowing to play all their classics including era-defining hits "Stairway to Heaven" and "Whole Lotta Love." *AFP*

***

Top of the Talk Shows

For those who missed last weekend's show biz gabfests on TV:

• Dolphy on his son Vandolph wedding girlfriend Jenny Salimao:

"Anak, inunahan mo ako ah."

• Vandolph on marrying Jenny:

"Ako, Quizon *lapitin daw ng babae... Kaya ako magpapakasal, mahal ko na ito eh. Ayoko nang maghanap pa ng iba."*

All's well, so soon

• Piolo Pascual hinting at a settlement re the libel case he filed against Lolit Solis:

"Sino ba ang may gusto ng kaaway. Sino ba ang gustong mapunta sa korte?" (*Sino ba ang nagdemanda?*)

• Lolit on her willingness to settle:

"Willing *na* willing *ako na makipagbati dahil nakapag-*apologize *naman ako. Talagang sinabi ko na,* 'I'm sorry.'" (Got that—she's good for it.)

Acceptance is a virtue

• Sharon Cuneta on teaming up once more with ex-husband Gabby Concepcion:

"If *ako lang at siya lang,* I guess *wala kaming problema.* [But] I don't think I'd have the heart to put my husband and children through that. *Kasi... paglalaruan pa rin kami ni* Gabby. *Ang masasaktan hindi kami, 'yung kanya-kanyang mga taong importante sa kani-kanilang buhay."* (We didn't get that, but it sounds good.)

• Vicki Belo on her family's acceptance of her boyfriend, Hayden Kho:

"It's what we're fighting for. We're happy within our little shell. But when it's your own family, it's your own daughter, it's painful." (You bet. But it's been a while, hasn't it?)

• Alfred Vargas on his split-up with LJ Reyes:

"It's painful... *Pero, wala,* we have to deal with this."

Choices, choices

• Donald Geisler on brother Baron, who remains in the Pinoy Big Brother house:

"Alam ko naman na kaya niya... I told him, 'Don't worry. I'll take care of mom. Basta... be good to your housemates.'"

• John Lloyd Cruz on KC Concepcion's remark that she'd like him as a leading man:

"Sino'ng hihindi sa isang KC Concepcion? *Parang lahat* in one package—*ganda, talento... Sino naman ako para tumanggi?"*

• Dennis Trillo on visiting son Calex:

*"Siyempre gusto kong ma-*experience *din ng* parents [*ko*] *na makita nila ang apo nila."*

• Dennis claiming to have silently brokered peace between Carlene Aguilar and Cristine Reyes:

"Nakausap ko ang both parties. *Pero hindi ko naisip na ganoon ka-*soon... *magkaka-ayos sila. Sobrang* thankful *din ako na nagkasundo sila. Nagka-ayos silang dalawa dahil pinagdadasal ko talaga 'yun."* (*Ligtas na si* Dennis *sa gulo.*)

• Dennis promising to stay single:

*"At para wala nang gulo... kailangan kong huwag munang ma-*identify *sa kahit kanino."* (*Sige nga.*)

• Dennis' Christmas wish?

"Sana makasama ko anak ko sa Christmas *kahit sandali."* (How does that song go? "It's your turn to cry...")

• Carlene's message to Dennis:

"Ayusin niya ang sarili niya. Huwag siyang mag-bitaw ng salita na hindi niya kayang panindigan. Yung sinasabi niyang single *muna,* let's wait and see. *Sana galingan niya ang pagtago."* (Go, girl.)

Not personal

• Sen. Bong Revilla on his spat with Optical Media Board chief Edu Manzano:

"Hindi naman dapat maging personalan. Pinag-uusapan natin dito is piracy for the good of the whole industry. It's a matter of miscommunication. I am here to help, *hindi para manggulo.* I'm here to support him. I'm here to help the industry. *Matapang siya, matapang rin ako."* (Oh, it was going so well—what happened?)

• Edu's reaction:

"Tama naman si Mr. Revilla *diyan, matapang ako lalo na kung nasa panig ako ng katotohanan. Alam po ni* Mr. Revilla *na totoo po ang sinasabi ko."* (*Uy, bati na sila.*)

"Sana alisin na po natin ang kaibi-kaibigan, kumpa-kumpare, kama-kamag-anak. Kasi ang pinag-uusapan dito buhay ng tao. Hindi ganoon ka-simple na, 'Pare, pasensiya na, tulong tulong na tayo.' Hindi po eh. Damage has been done. *Ang nagiging problema po natin, lalo na ngayong lumalakas or na-emboldened tuloy yung mga kalaban na mag-*resist and *ngayon,* you are putting the lives *nung aming mga tao* at risk. And to think sa OMB, *hindi po lalaki lang yan. May mga babae din kami."* (*Ay, di pa pala.*)

• Edu on Bong's criticism of his performance as OMB chief:

"At this point in time, not only have you hurt me, you hurt my family. How can I forgive you? *Hindi porke nag-*sorry, *okey na eh. Wala akong milyon-milyong* budget *sa Senado. Wala akong dalawampung* bodyguards. *Ako po ay naglalakad, alam po ng lahat, na mag-isa. Mga kaibigan, ang dala ko lang 'yung iniwan sa akin ng aking ama, prinsipyo."* (*Ang layo pa palang magkabati.*)

• Bong on his "below-average" rating of Edu's performance:

"*Yung tinanong sa akin doon sa* Senado, *'yun ay base sa* operations on that day. It was below average on that day."

• Edu's reaction:

"*Nagulat po ako... parang* daily *'ata ang pagre-*rate *sa akin. Mahirap kasi hindi ko siya nakakausap eh."* (*Ang layo-layo talaga.*)

(Thanks to Startalk, The Buzz, Showbiz Central and Entertainment Live.)

'70s ICONS (from left) Jimmy Page, Robert Plant and John Paul Jones as they appear on the cover of Rolling Stone magazine's latest issue.

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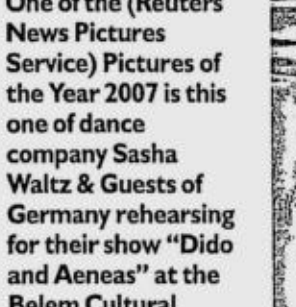
Pictures of the Year 2007

WET DANCE
One of the (Reuters News Pictures Service) Pictures of the Year 2007 is this one of dance company Sasha Waltz & Guests of Germany rehearsing for their show "Dido and Aeneas" at the Belem Cultural Centre in Lisbon in March.

OPENING TODAY

From page G1

mancing a swashbuckler (Owen). Will Lawrence of Empire mag says that it "will beguile and repel in equal measure." Lisa Schwarzbaum of Entertainment Weekly thinks it's "prematurely old, square and cautious." Ruthe Stein of San Francisco Chronicle differs: "It's spectacular to look at."



Death Proof

Stars Kurt Russell, Rosario Dawson, Rose McGowan, Tracie Thorns

Directed by Quentin Tarantino

One half of the "Grindhouse" double bill (with Robert Rodriguez), this homage to "1970s exploitation flicks" features beauties harassed by an insane stuntman (Russell). Todd McCarthy of Variety relates that "its merits reside as much in its dialogue as in the kick-ass action." Demetrios Matheou of The Independent states that it's "cool, sexy, scary and shockingly violent." Matthew Turner of The View London calls it "a trashy ... treat."

Tatlong Araw ng Kadiliman

Stars Katya Santos, Gwen Garci, Precious Adona, Bugz Daigo

Directed by Khavn de la Cruz

Three girls are trapped in their house as the end of the world draws near. They each try to fend off the demons that are knocking on the door. According to press notes, director De la Cruz "drew on the Book of Revelation" as inspiration. The flick's trailer was rated X by the Censors because of the torrid, same-sex kissing scene between Santos and Garci, says De la Cruz. Exclusively in Robinsons Galleria Ortigas, Ermita and Bacolod.

Catacombs

Stars Shannyn Sossamon, Alecia "Pink" Moore, Cabral Ibaka, Cain Manoli

Directed by David Elliot, Tom Coker

Purportedly from the same producers as the hit "Saw," this thriller follows sisters (Sossamon and Moore) who encounter all sorts of horrors in the underground graves of Paris. AnthroFred of Slasherpool.com rants: It's "slow-paced." Michael Scrutchin of Flipside Movie Emporium concurs: "It never achieves the level of nasty fun it aspires to." Focused Distortion reviewer complains: "I never really cared for anyone in it."

'Marimar wows fans' . . .

From page G1

a big smile, knowing she didn't just pop in and out of the scene. The Concert Queen has a throne all her own.

Happy Divalicious Birthday, girl. My message in your souvenir program sums it all up for me.

Movie promo

I asked **Valerie Concepcion** for her final say on talks that **Jinky Pacquiao** is fuming mad at her because of her torrid kissing scene with Pacman. "I'm so drained with the issue," she says. "I promised myself not to comment anymore."

After **Manny Pacquiao** was linked to **Ara Mina**, now it's Valerie's turn. From whatever angle I look at it, it seems like a publicity stunt for their movie. That's what I call "Ads" disguised as Intrigues Ad Infinitum!

Cool show

Catch the coolest youth-oriented show ever to hit your screens, "Rush TV...Atin Ito!," Monday to Saturday, 6-7:30 p.m. on Studio 23. They have student-combo spiels where students get their 15 minutes of fame.

Among the segments: "School is Cool," where celebs are interviewed by **Mico Aytona** about their college days; "Say5," where **Say Alonzo** surveys the top 5 of everything around the Metro; and "First Pick," where **Dino Imperial** lets you in on the latest gizmos and gadgets.

See why there's a kind of hush about "Rush (TV)" all over the campuses.

Christmas tilts

Join Sta. Lucia East Grand Mall's "Sayaw Pasko Inter-School Dance" competition. Registration is until Dec. 12. Finals is on Dec. 14. Its Christmas Toy Live Mannequin Contest is from Dec. 17 to 21, with finals on Dec. 22, while the Christmas Kids Craze is on Dec. 25.

For details, call 681-5401 to 19 loc. 118. Sta. Lucia will play Santa Claus to the winners!

E-mail wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com.

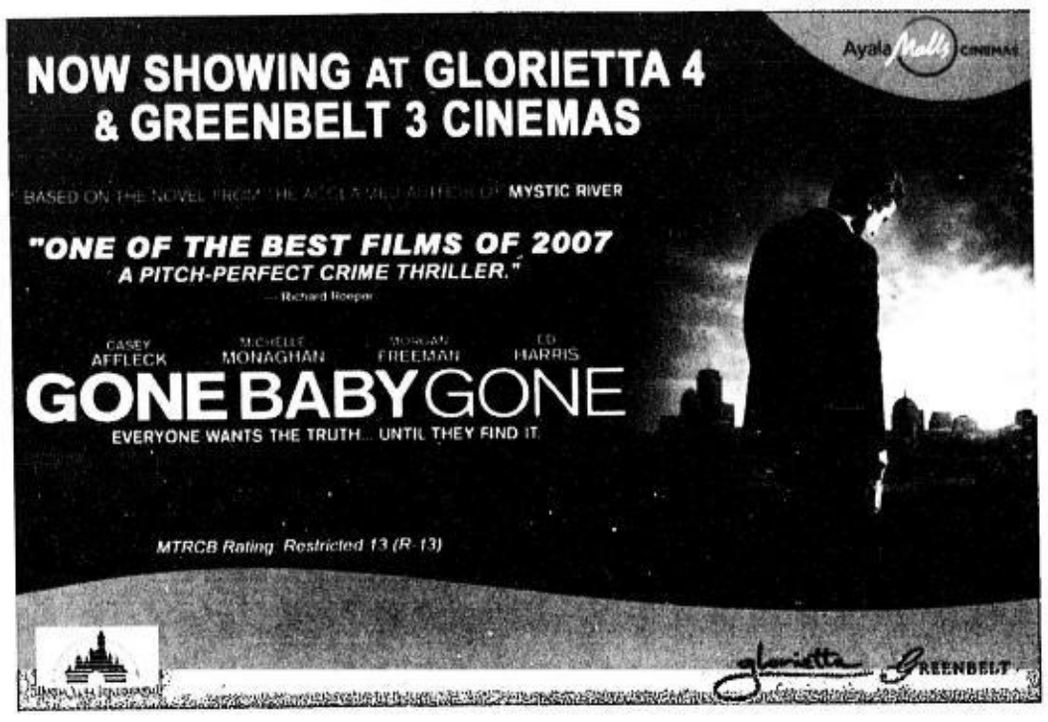
LA . . .

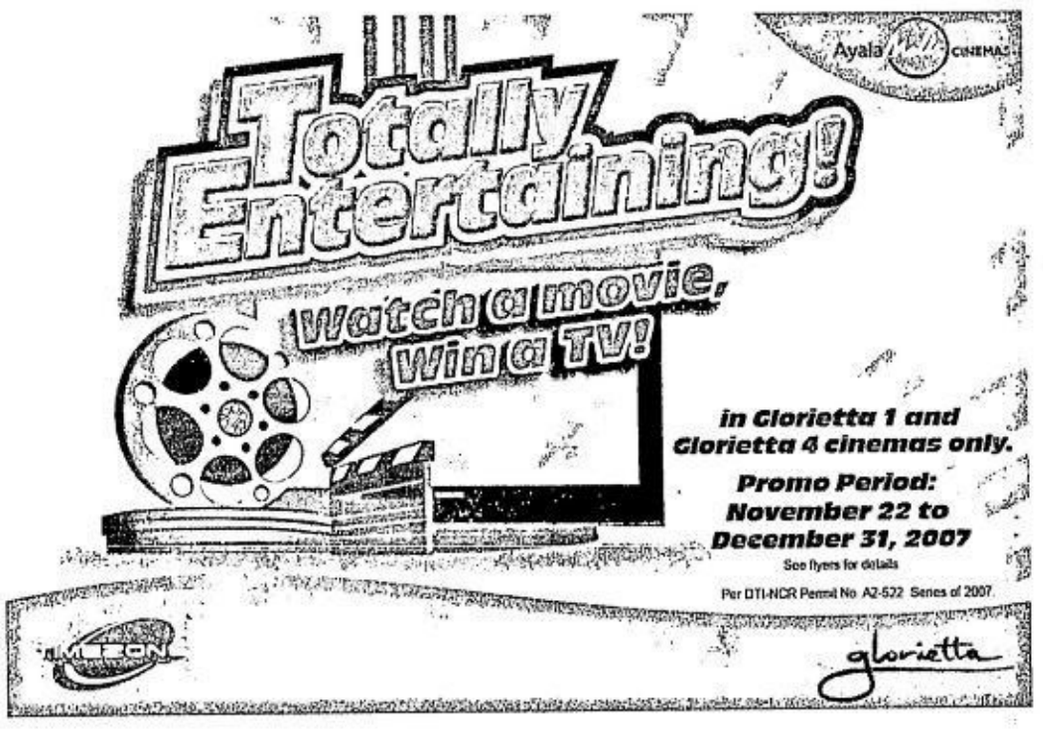
From page G4

honor to Amy Ryan for two films: "Gone Baby Gone," in which she plays a neglectful mother whose young daughter has been abducted, and "Before the Devil Knows You're Dead," in which she co-stars as the sharp-tongued ex-wife of a man who sets out to rob his parents' jewelry business.

Tamara Jenkins received the Screenplay prize for "The Savages," about an estranged brother and sister forced to care for their ailing father.

"There Will Be Blood," director Anderson, star Day-Lewis, cinematographer Robert Elswit and composer Jonny Greenwood of Radiohead also were the top picks Sunday by the New York Film Critics Online. *AP*





LA critics pick oil-boom epic as Best Film

LOS ANGELES—THE OIL-BOOM EPIC "There Will Be Blood" was chosen as 2007's Best Film by the Los Angeles Film Critics Association, one of the first key groups to weigh in during the long buildup to the Academy Awards.

Based on the novel "Oil!" by Upton Sinclair, the film received three other honors: Best Actor for Daniel Day-Lewis as a California petroleum baron who clashes with his son and a local preacher in the early 1900s; Best Director for Paul Thomas Anderson; and Production Design for Jack Fisk.

The Best Actress prize went to Marion Cotillard as singer Edith Piaf in the French film "La Vie En Rose."

The Los Angeles group's picks and upcoming choices from the New York Film Critics Circle precede Thursday's nominations for the Golden Globes, Hollywood's second-biggest film honors, after the Oscars.

Globe nominations and critics prizes can boost Oscar prospects, particularly for lesser-known films and performances. The Oscar awards ceremony is scheduled on Feb. 24.

"4 Months, 3 Weeks & 2 Days," which won the top honor at the recent Cannes Film Festival, was named Best Foreign-Language film by the Los Angeles critics and earned the Supporting Actor honor for Vlad Ivanov as a menacing abortion provider.

The critics gave their Supporting Actress

LA CRITICS/ G3

DANIEL Day-Lewis is a California petroleum baron who clashes with his son in "There Will Be Blood," which the Los Angeles Film Critics Association voted as Best Film of 2007; Lewis himself was chosen Best Actor. AP

Thursday, December 13, 2007 ★★ 6 sections / Vol. 23 / No. 5 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

REM ZAMORA

GOOD WORK, says US envoy Kristie Kenney, at the annual benefit of the Children's Hour, which appeals to individuals and companies to donate an hour of their earnings to fund learning projects for poor kids. *(Story on Page A2)*

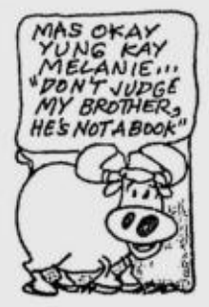
Big transport groups shun nationwide strike today **NEWS** / A2

89-year-old Luneta Hotel now being restored to its prewar glory **METRO** / A18

Peso rises to 41.31:$1; defies regional currency downtrend due to US Fed's rate cut **BUSINESS** / B1

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Bush loses close run for 'Foot in Mouth'



LONDON—FORMER England soccer manager Steve McClaren fought off tough competition from US President George W. Bush to win a dreaded "Foot in

BUSH/ A8

CHRISTMAS BONUS

1.4-M gov't workers to get ₱10,000 each

By Christine O. Avendaño

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARroyo yesterday gave the government's 1.4 million workers a Christmas bonus of P10,000, citing a "robust economy" and savings in operations.

They will get the money not later than Dec. 17, said Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said that those entitled to the windfall were workers employed by national government agencies, corporations and financial institutions, as well as others who have rendered at least four months of service.

Employees with less than four months service will get a bonus on a prorated basis.

Andaya told reporters that the national government through the Department of Budget and Management would shell out P7,000 for each employee and that this would total around P7 billion.

The remaining P3,000 will be shouldered by concerned agencies through their savings, Andaya said.

Last year, he said the government gave out a Christmas

1.4-M GOV'T/ A6

RECORD-BREAKER Fil-Am James Walsh jubilates after getting his gold medal and accompanying SEA Games mascot during the swimming competition awarding ceremonies on Wednesday. Walsh's winning time of 2:00.05 in the 200-meter butterfly smashed the six-year meet mark and contributed to the Filipino swimmers' 8-gold haul. *(More SEAG stories on Pages A21-26)*

RAFFY LERMA

Saguisag girl falls, lifts RP spirit

By Musong R. Castillo

NAKHON RATCHASIMA, Thailand—She's an athlete before anything else, but a nagging knee injury got in the way.

Gymnast Caissa Saguisag's valiant effort to compete at the 24th Southeast Asian Games despite a family tragedy has become a source of inspiration to many of her fellow athletes who are still scrambling for the gold.

Caissa, the 16-year-old youngest child of Rene and Dulce Saguisag, vied on the balance beam on Monday but was even-

SAGUISAG/ A8

GMA pal wins Transco bid

Senators oppose awarding of nat'l power grid

By Abigail L. Ho and Gil C. Cabacungan jr.

A CONSORTIUM BACKED BY a powerful businessman close to President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday won the right to operate the strategic national power transmission grid with a $3.95-billion bid in a controversial auction denounced as a "lutong macao," or a charade.

Opposition senators said they would seek a Supreme Court injunction to stop the awarding of the assets of National Transmission Corp. (Transco) to Monte Oro Grid Resources that counts among its partners Enrique Razon, treasurer of the administration Team Unity in the May senatorial elections.

The sale of Transco assets has been

GMA PAL/ A8

NOTHING TO SNEEZE AT: At one point during the Human Rights Day observance at the Palace, President Macapagal-Arroyo appears to be nursing a cold and a beaming Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita seems not to have a care in the world. Ms Arroyo once again pledges to address the extrajudicial and unsolved killings of political activists and journalists that have smeared her human rights record.

EDWIN BACASMAS

Ermita says Christmas ceasefire uninterrupted

By Christine O. Avendaño and Nikko Dizon

THE GOVERNMENT WILL DECLARE an "uninterrupted" suspension of offensive military operations (Somo) against the communist New People's Army for the Yuletide Season, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said yesterday.

Ermita said the Somo against the NPA would be declared before Christmas Day.

"But as to the details on when (it will be enforced) and how long, I don't know yet," Ermita told reporters at his weekly news briefing.

The Somo was recommended by Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro and the Armed Forces.

ERMITA/ A8

Filipino UN worker killed in al-Qaida attack in Algiers

A FILIPINO WOMAN STAFFER OF the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) was among those killed in a car bomb attack in Algiers on Tuesday, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said last night.

Claro Cristobal, DFA assistant secretary and spokesperson, said the WFP announced the death of Gene Luna, 48 years old, who joined the WFP in Afghanistan as finance

FILIPINO/ A4

Palace slams survey on corruption

By Christine O. Avendaño, Kate Pedroso and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY QUESTIONED the credibility of the survey which found that 42 percent of the respondents considered President Macapagal-Arroyo the "most corrupt" leader in Philippine history, pointing out that it was paid for by her enemies.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said he learned that the Pulse Asia survey was commissioned by "a few people ... not necessarily friendly to our President."

"There is such a thing as determin-

PALACE/ A6

GMA now takes UN report on killings seriously; vows zero political violence

By Christine O. Avendaño and Leila B. Salaverria

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO yesterday promised that her administration would strive for a Philippines with "zero political violence," and work with Congress for new laws that would protect rights abuse victims, including a law against torture.

Speaking at the Human Rights Day celebration in Malacañang, Ms Arroyo said her administration was taking seriously the report of United Nations Special Rapporteur Philip Alston on the extrajudicial killings of journalists and political activists, which it had largely attributed to the military.

She lamented the Philippines' history of political violence from both the Right and the Left, and said she hoped to end this problem.

"No one should die for their political beliefs," the President said in a speech before members of her Cabinet, the Senate and the House, the judiciary

GMA NOW/ A6

3 ex-DAR chiefs back Sumilao farmers' claim

By Jerome Aning

NOW THERE ARE THREE FORMER agrarian reform secretaries backing the farmers who marched for two months from Sumilao, Bukidnon, to Manila to press the government to stop the conversion into a hog farm of the 144-hectare land they are claiming.

3 EX-DAR/ A4

Ex-Peru president sentenced to 6 years for abuse of authority

LIMA, PERU—A SUPREME COURT judge on Tuesday convicted former President Alberto Fujimori of abuse of authority and sentenced him to six years in prison—the first criminal conviction for the ousted Peruvian leader who also faces human rights and corruption charges.

Justice Pedro Guillermo Urbina declared Fujimori guilty of abusing his power for ordering an illegal search as his government imploded in scandal seven years ago. He also fined Fujimori the equivalent of US$134,900.

Fujimori was convicted of having a military aide pose as a prosecutor and search without a warrant the luxury apartment of the wife of his spy chief Vladimiro Montesinos in November 2000.

It was the first prison sentence handed down for Fujimori, 69, who ruled Peru from 1990 to 2000, before fleeing to Japan, his ancestral homeland, as his government collapsed. He faces three other trials on charges that include extrajudicial killings of leftists.

EX-PERU/ A6

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2007

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Extreme Northern Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rains while Mindanao will have cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies and isolated rains.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Mostly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Mostly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY: SCHATZI QUODALA, PDI RESEARCH/12/12/07 SOURCE: PAGASA

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(In exact order)

Mid-Day SUERTRES Evening

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MEGALOTTO 6/45

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Big transport groups shun nationwide strike

By Riza T. Olchondra and Alcuin Papa

THE THREE MILLION OR SO COMMUTERS IN METRO Manila can heave a sigh of relief as leaders of major transport groups indicated they will not be joining a transport strike today led by the militant Pinag-kaisang Samahan ng Tsuper at Operators Nationwide (Piston).

"It is their right to go on strike, but we believe we should sort out our problems on the table instead of on the streets, since it is the minimum wage earners and students who are affected by strikes, not the oil companies," said Orlando Marquez Sr., national president of Philippine Jeepney Operators and Drivers Alliance Foundation Inc. and Makati Jeepney Operator and Driver's Alliance.

Marquez and other transport leaders met in a dialogue with Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes late Tuesday during which they said they would not be joining the strike.

Just the same, the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) and the Philippine National Police (PNP) has prepared 10 buses to give free rides if the need arises, MMDA General Manager Robert Nacianceno said.

Strike monitoring

"We will start monitoring early in the morning. The impact of the strike should be minimal since all other major transport groups have said they will not join the strike. As long as PISTON does not try to force drivers of other groups to join, I don't think there will be problems," Nacianceno said.

Only the major thoroughfares like Edsa, Roxas Blvd., Taft Ave., and Rizal Ave. are expected to be affected by the strike since other groups are not joining, said Senior Supt. Antonio Gumiran of the Philippine National Police's directorate for operations.

About 20 additional PNP personnel will be deployed in these thoroughfares to monitor the strike and maintain order, he said.

The Light Rail Transport (LRT) and Metro Rail Transport (MRT) management said it will be business as usual for the metro train systems.

The Department of Education announced that there will be regular classes in public elementary and secondary schools today, in spite of the planned transport strike.

They'd rather talk

While government agencies were finalizing contingency measures, transport leaders told Reyes they preferred to continue talks with government to bring down fuel costs, curb extortion and illegal operators, and finalize the single-ticketing system for traffic violations.

The group included Zeny Maranan of the Federation of Jeepney Operators and Drivers Association of the Philippines (Fejodap), Rolando Marquez of Makati Jeepney Operators and Drivers Association (MJODA), Obet Martin of PASANG MASDA, Boy Vargas of the Alliance of Land Transportation Operators and Drivers Association of the Philippines (Altodap), Atty. Vigor Mendoza II of the Isang United Transport Koalisyon (1UTAK), Efren De Luna of Alliance of Concerned Transport Organization (Acto) and Manuel Duran of the Mindanao-based group called Transporter.

US envoy lauds Children's Hour, backers

By Julie M. Aurelio

BUSINESS PEOPLE MAKE GOOD business partners when they know how to give back to the community.

United States Ambassador Kristie Kenney yesterday stressed this point as she commended Filipino businessmen for the great work they have been doing in the nine years of the Children's Hour.

"What makes you great business partners is when you make sure that our youngest citizens have the opportunity to succeed," Kenney said at the P1,000 per plate annual benefit lunch of the Children's Hour.

Kenney, a known advocate of children's rights and welfare, was invited to keynote the yearly event to raise funds for the Children's Hour projects.

She commended the Makati Business Club for its numerous efforts in corporate social responsibility, particularly its active participation and contributions to the Children's Hour.

"You should take pride in being at the forefront of pending great economic growth, especially with recent resurgence in international investments," Kenney said.

Ramon del Rosario of the MBC of trustees appealed to fellow businessmen to think of children like Marianet Amper, the 11-year-old girl of Cebu City who died an apparent suicide.

"We should always keep in mind that we are raising funds for projects for children like Marianet," said Del Rosario, chair of the MBC board of trustees.

WHAT'S INSIDE

PIRATES free 9 RP sailors /A9

PALACE TAKES up Roxas proposal on peso loans /A5

Trillanes told: Not so fast

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

DETAINED SEN. ANTONIO TRILLANES IV should not have expected to get his "pork barrel" ahead of other senators.

A number of senators, including an administration ally, yesterday declared they have not received their Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF), popularly called 'pork barrel,' for the last three years.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr., Senators Rodolfo Biazon, Jamby Madrigal and Richard Gordon said Malacañang has not released their pork barrel allocations since 2005.

"If it's there, it's there. For the record we have not received any since 2004," said Gordon, an administration ally.

The issue of pork barrel came up at the plenary floor yesterday after opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson asked whether Malacañang had the right to refuse Trillanes' request for the release of P100 million in pork barrel funds.

Each senator is entitled to a P200 million pork barrel fund while congressmen are entitled to P70 million.

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, another administration ally, said Malacañang could not refuse but merely "delay" the release of the legislators' pork barrel.

Senate President Manuel Villar promised to take up the matter with Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya.

But Andaya said the least he could do for Trillanes was to forward the latter's request for allocations for his pet project to the concerned agencies.

Pork barrel is part of the programmed funds in the national budget.

Legislators could identify pet projects in various departments, usually in the departments of public works, education and health.. With reports from Christine O. Avendaño and Kristine L. Alave

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Erap bats for United opposition in 2010

OUSTED PRESIDENT Joseph Estrada, recently pardoned by President Macapagal-Arroyo for the crime of plunder, said yesterday he was confident that an opposition candidate would be elected President in the 2010 elections.

With less than three years to go before presidential elections, Estrada said he was working on uniting the opposition.

Based on the names being floated by the administration, Estrada said the ruling party's chances of retaining the presidency appeared "very slim."

However, Estrada conceded that there were factions in the opposition bloc that could hamper their strategy of having one solid team in 2010.

Estrada, who still commands a significant following among voters, refused to give names of possible opposition candidates for the presidency. He said he would leave it to the surveys to reveal who the top five candidates would be.

"We will try our best to have one candidate," Estrada said in an interview on Tuesday.

Oakwood deal 'under duress'

By Nikko Dizon

MILITARY CHIEF GEN. HERMOgenes Esperon Jr. claimed that negotiations to end the July 2003 Oakwood mutiny between the government and the Magdalo junior officers who led the rebellion were "made under duress," raising the question whether the terms of agreement were binding or not.

"You probably only heard now somebody saying everything was under duress. The aim there was simply to end the siege of Oakwood," Esperon told reporters Wednesday night.

Asked if there was deception on the part of the government, Esperon replied: "Is that deception? Is that deception?"

Esperon confirmed the testimony of Army Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim at the Magdalo trial last Tuesday that he (Esperon) was opposed to the agreement that the renegade officers would only be reprimanded.

Lim, who was then part of the government negotiating panel, testified that he was enumerating the terms of the rebel soldiers in a meeting in Malacañang when Esperon cut him off to say, "They brought high-powered firearms and they will only be reprimanded?

Lim then told Esperon: "The agreement was already done."

Esperon confirmed what he said. "Why only admonish them when they had arms. In other words, he (Lim) was for giving them lighter punishments but I wanted the full force of the law to be applied," Esperon said.

5 civilians sought in Pen probe

By Alcuin Papa

THE CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION AND Detection Group (CIDG) said yesterday it has invited five high-profile civilians to shed light on their participation in the Manila Peninsula affair.

CIDG chief Director Edgardo Doromal identified the five as civil society leaders Linda Montayre and Jose "Linggoy" Alcuaz; lawyer, Lorna Kapunan, Novaliches Bishop Antonio Tobias, and former Makati City police chief Abner Afuang.

Doromal told reporters yesterday that film clips from TV networks showed the five "either in the pack of people at the Manila Peninsula or on the street march in Makati City from the courtroom to the hotel."

Doromal also said only RPN-9 TV network has complied with a subpoena sent to them by the CIDG to submit their raw footage of the Manila Peninsula incident.

He said ABS-CBN merely authenticated footage obtained by the CIDG as those shot by their cameramen. Still to submit their footage are GMA-7, ABC-5, NBN-4, UNTV, IBC-13 and Net 25.

Meanwhile, Makati City Mayor Jejomar Binay wrote to Southern Police District Senior Supt. Jaime Calungsod and expressed alarm over reports that police investigators were apparently going out of their way to link him to the Nov. 29 failed revolt.

He said he has received information that the SPD has been trying to extract admissions from Makati police officers that the mayor ordered them to give to the Trillanes group as they marched toward the hotel.

Binay, who sent a copy of his letter to Philippine National Police chief Avelino Razon, raised his suspicion that it was part of another effort to suspend him based on the charge that he had advance knowledge of Trillanes' plan and had supported the failed attempt to ignite a people power revolt.

Calungsod, the SPD's deputy district director for administration, is the head of the team tasked to investigate the Makati police over its failure to stop Trillanes' group from proceeding to the Peninsula.

Binay, head of the United Opposition, said the local police were caught unaware by Trillanes' move.

He said Calungsod should shift the focus of his investigation to Armed Forces Chief of Staff Hermogenes Esperon for admitting that he had received a military intelligence report that "something would happen on the 29th or 30th."

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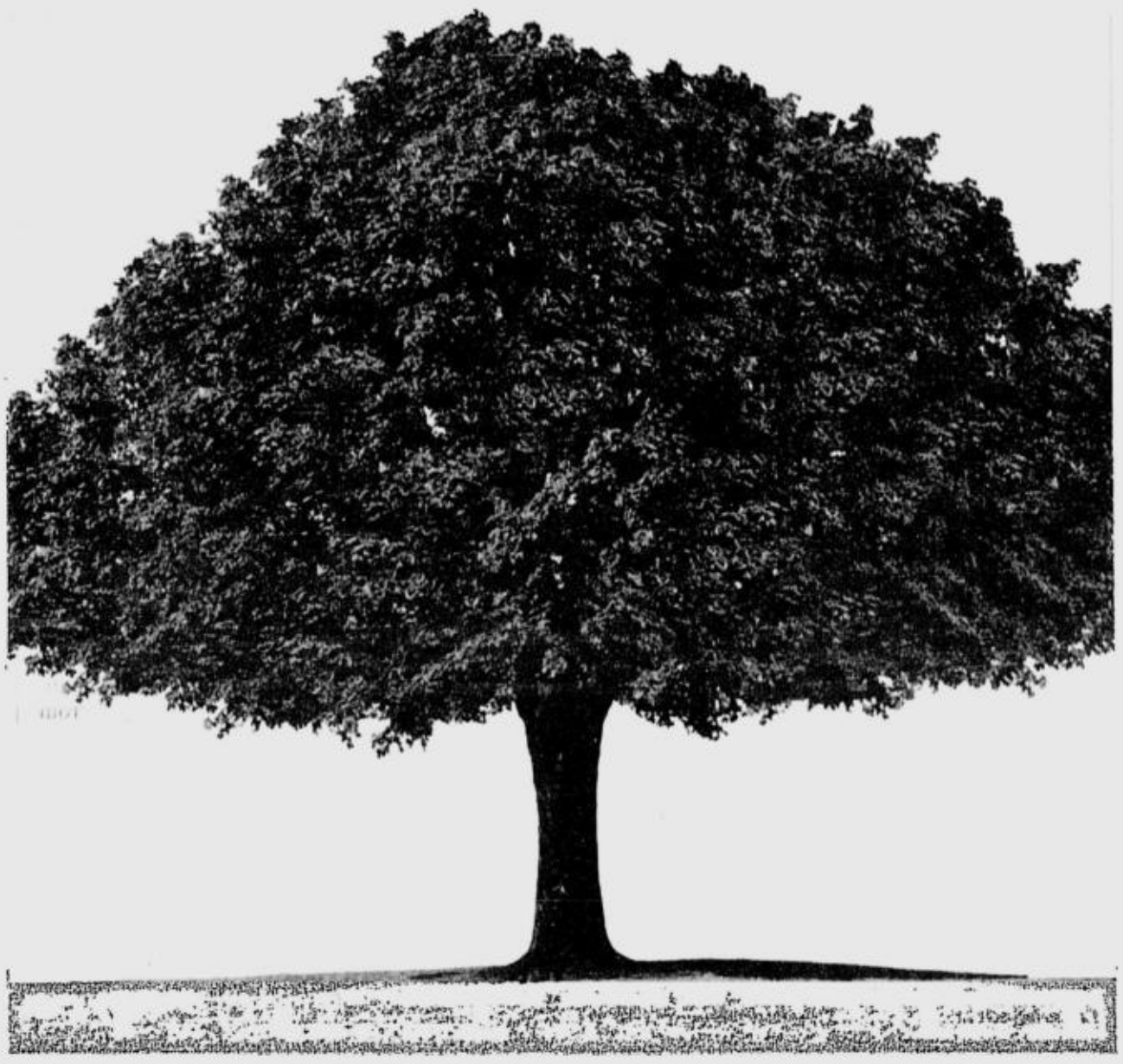

Wise tips to beat mas rush

Christmas is a time for merrymaking and lots o... but it's a the most times of The endle list, the buying g anxiety crowded all con create st life. T before the r gettin regist read help you holi su Chris...

TO DO:
- finish X'mas shopping
- Look for party costume!!!
- Wine for X'mas party
- Go to the bank

...ng. This way, can shop relaxed and urbed. What's salespeople friendlier and can give you vided attention en they don't e a huge crowd andle.

me early if u're shopping

Create a Christmas budg...

For many of us, t... after-effects Christmas inclu... huge credit ca... bills that can ta... many months... settle. But Christ... doesn't need to ... pain in the pock... you plan ahead... early as you ... create a ro... budget of anticip... Christmas c... Include in ... budget all the... you're planni... buy, plus "hidden ... expenses such as ... unexpected gifts ... and overseas ...

...le to ...ends, ...to go ...first ...ning. ...avoid ...have ...your ...ality ...oved ...ends ...hey ...by ...ality ...will ...gate. ...able ...will

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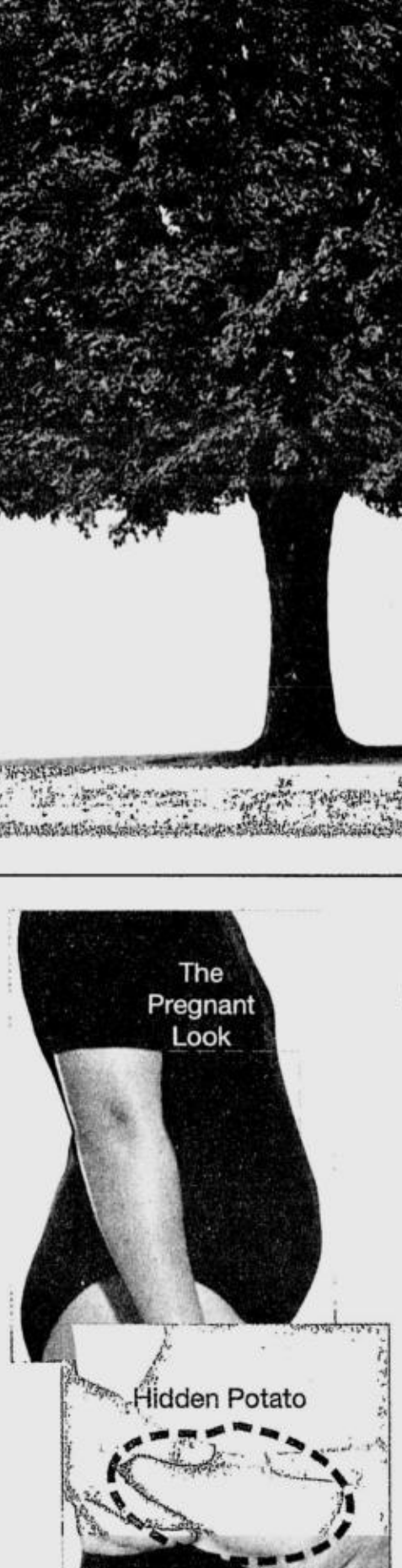

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3 ex-DAR chiefs back Sumilao farmers' claim

From page A1

In a press conference yesterday at the farmers' makeshift tent in front of the Department of Agrarian Reform central office in Quezon City, ex-Secretaries Ernesto Garilao, Florencio "Butch" Abad and Jose Mari Ponce called on the incumbent, Nasser Pangandaman, to listen to the farmers, act in accordance with the law, and revoke the conversion order to prepare for the redistribution of the contested property.

Former Undersecretaries Gerry Bulatao and Hector Soliman, former Assistant Secretary Cliff Burkeley, former Legal Affairs Director Joy Casis and former DAR-Region 10 Director Charlito Manlupig added their voices to the call of Garilao, Abad and Ponce.

Abad actually expressed support for the farmers as early as Saturday.

"We call upon our colleagues in the [DAR] to uphold the letter and spirit of the rules on conversion, and in the process strengthen the institution and increase its legitimacy," the group said in a joint statement read by Garilao.

Also present to express support were former Bukidnon Rep. Nereus Acosta, who translated the joint statement into Cebuano for the farmers' benefit.

Abad's wife, former Batanes Rep. Dina Abad, and Edmundo Garcia, a member of the 1986 Constitutional Commission and a major author of the social justice provisions of the 1987 Charter, were present as well.

The group also called for the immediate issuance of a cease-and-desist order, saying it would "provide all parties the proper environment to seek constructive solutions to this knotty problem in Sumilao."

It was Garilao who, in 1994, denied the application of original owner Norberto Quisumbing for the conversion of the land from agricultural to agro-industrial use. Quisumbing subsequently appealed to Malacañang, which approved his development plan in 1996.

Bulatao had worked under Garilao and Abad, Soliman under Abad, and Burkeley, Manlupig and Casis under Garilao.

Only Ponce, who held the agrarian reform portfolio in 2004, is still with the government, being the current chief executive officer of the Cagayan Special Economic Zone and Freeport.

No pressure

In a interview later at his office, Pangandaman said he "was not pressured at all" by his predecessors' expression of support for the farmers.

He said he would rule on the case "based on merits" and at the "soonest" possible time.

He welcomed the group's call for the contending parties to explore "alternative modes of resolving the conflict" to ensure "a win-win solution to the case."

Pangandaman said the contending parties could resort to "alternative dispute resolution" (ADR), the mechanics of which were laid down last year in Executive Order No. 523.

However, he said, his office could not initiate ADR because of the pending case.

The farmers maintain that the new land owner, San Miguel Foods Inc. (SMFI), failed to undertake the conversion of the property into an agribusiness park, as Quisumbing had originally promised.

Quisumbing sold the property to SMFI in 2002, two years before the end of the five-year conversion period stipulated by DAR.

Based on DAR rules

The former agrarian reform executives said the case for the immediate revocation of the conversion order was based "very clearly" on DAR rules.

They said a conversion order was issued to an applicant as an exception to the general rule that agricultural land should be covered by agrarian reform.

"[T]herefore, if the specifics of the conversion order are not complied with within the time frame of five years, the property reverts back to the coverage of agrarian reform. It is also very clear that noncompliance with the strict rules on conversion requires its immediate revocation and distribution to the farmer-beneficiaries," they said.

Said Edmundo Garcia: "[The farmers' long march] is not a request for a Christmas gift but a struggle for justice. And I think this is important for our people to recognize and remember—that the struggle for justice requires a marathon mentality. I would like to thank [the farmers] because [they] gave us a lesson."

Abad said the Sumilao case had become a symbol of the desperation of landless farmers.

He said the manner in which the government would deal with the case could help give meaning to the amnesty being offered to communist rebels, many of whom were landless farmers frustrated by the agrarian reform program.

The former DAR officials said SMFI, a subsidiary of food and beverage giant San Miguel Corp., could not have acted in good faith when it bought the land:

"SMFI's argument that [it] bought the property in good faith contradicts the claims of its owner that they do good business and good corporate citizenship. They should know that they bought an agricultural land conditioned upon the compliance with the conversion order granted to its previous owner."

They said SMFI should likewise have known that a hog farm was "very inconsistent" with the conversion plan promised by Quisumbing.

Original plan

The original plan included a development academy, a cultural center, an institute for livelihood science, a museum, a library, a golf course, a sports development complex, an agro-industrial park, forest development and support facilities, a 360-room hotel, a restaurant and housing projects.

None of the planned projects was implemented, according to the farmers. Instead, Quisumbing had the land registered under another title and sold it to SMFI, they said.

SMFI's contention is that the five-year period started only in 2002, when development permits were issued.

Pangandaman said this was provided for by DAR Administrative Order No. 1 series of 1989.

Speaking in behalf of the farmers, Napoleon Merida Jr., chair of the San Vicente Landless Farmers Association, expressed gratitude for the support of the former DAR officials.

He said they could not understand why the government could not make a decision on "the land that was awarded to us 12 years ago."

He added that walking 1,700 km for two months was "only physically tiring, but waiting for Pangandaman's action is emotionally tiring."

Filipino UN ...

From page A1

officer five years ago.

"Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo expresses the governments sorrow over Luna's death and its solidarity with the international community in condemning the senseless act of terror in Algiers," Cristobal said.

"DFA will be coordinating closely with WFP on the repatriation of Luna's remains and in helping her family cope with this tragedy," he added.

In Rome, WFP Executive Director Josette Sheeran expressed condolences to the family of Luna, who died when the third floor of the UN building housing the WFP offices was completely destroyed by a car bomb. *(See related stories on Pages A9 and A19.)*

Luna had only been in the city a week, the WFP said Wednesday, adding that many more of its staff could have died.

The UN agency said another staffer, Lynda Matougui, was pulled alive from the rubble and would be evacuated for medical treatment Wednesday.

It said the death toll could have been much higher, as most of the WFP staff were out of the office on a training course at the time of the explosion.

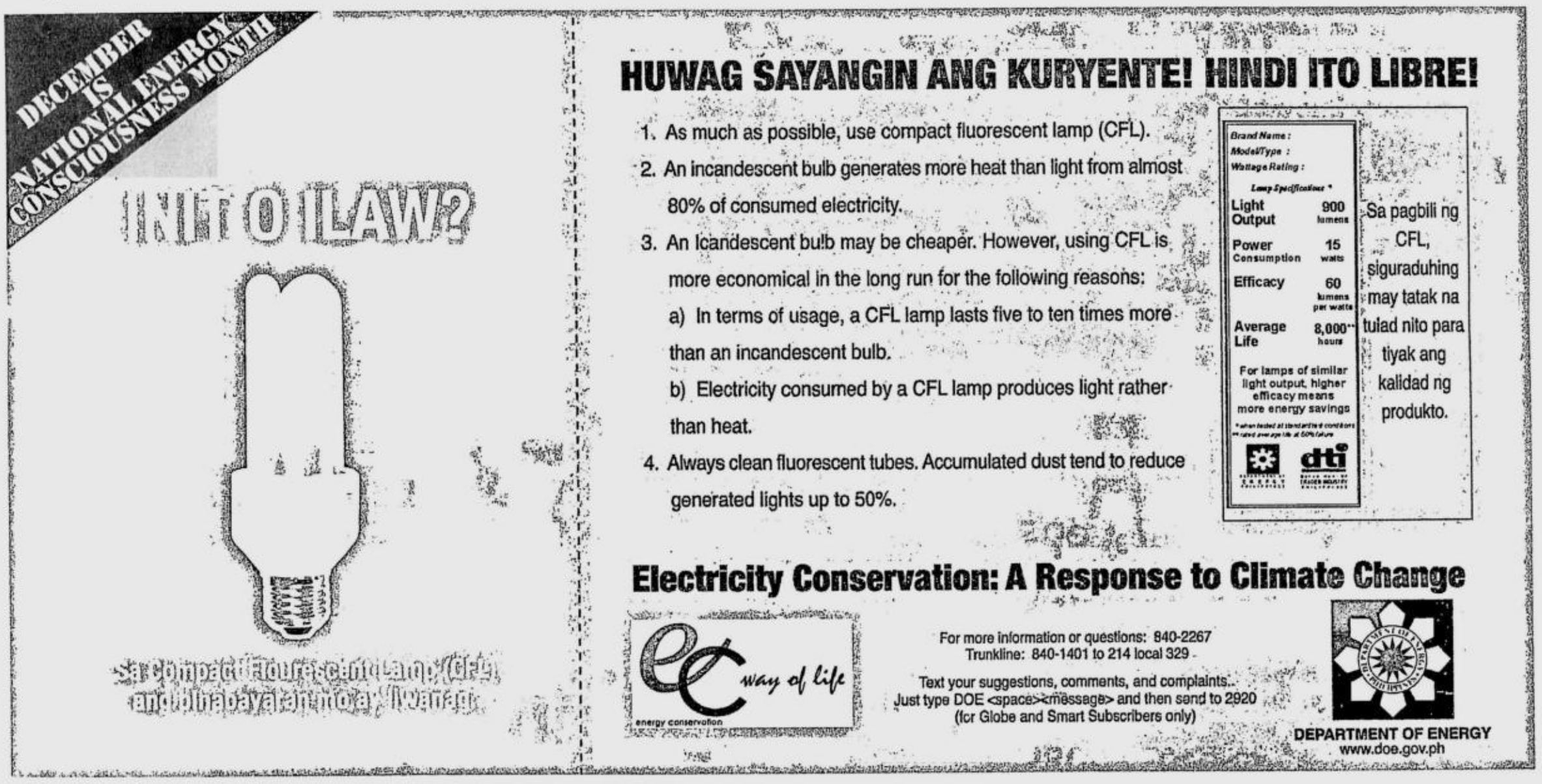
Luna joined the program as a finance officer in Afghanistan and was transferred to Algiers only last week, the WFP said.

"We have lost a dedicated member of our WFP family, as well as many others who served to help those in need," Sheeran said in a statement.

"I am outraged and saddened at this senseless act of violence against those helping the world's most vulnerable."

The WFP said 36 of its humanitarian workers had been killed, injured or detained so far this year.

The government said 26 people were killed and 177 wounded by Tuesday's bombs. Hospital sources contacted by AFP gave a toll of 62 dead and about 100 injured. The UN has said at least 11 of its staff died in the blast. *AFP and Cynthia D. Balana*



Palace takes up Roxas proposal on peso loans

ROXAS

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO HAS ordered the Department of Finance to consider the proposal of Sen. Mar Roxas for the government to shift from dollar to peso loans in order to curb the local currency's climb and ease the pain on overseas Filipino workers, exporters and the tourism and call center industries.

Roxas reported that the President gave the order during the Legislative-Executive Development Advisory Council on Tuesday in Malacañang where economic managers and lawmakers tackled ways how to mitigate the impact of a strong peso.

"I'm thankful that President Arroyo heard us out. She asked the Finance Secretary to study our proposal and consider its implementation," said Roxas whose proposal seeks to cut the supply of dollars while raising the demand for pesos.

Roxas, who filed a resolution seeking a Senate inquiry into the rise in prices of commodities during the peak holiday season amid a strong peso, said this strategy could be implemented directly in the 2008 budget where the government had programmed to borrow P125.43 billion from abroad, of which P87.67 billion would be used to roll over maturing debt.

"We have a situation where we are flooded with dollars, yet the government still plans to borrow dollars to roll over our maturing debt. We are shooting ourselves in the foot by doing this," said Roxas who suggested that the government take advantage of the strong peso by retiring more of its dollar debts.

Losing end

Roxas made the proposal as the Arroyo administration appeared helpless in the face of the strengthening peso brought about by the continued dollar inflows and weak US economy.

In an interview with reporters Tuesday, Roxas said: "Compared to the peso-dollar rate last year, our OFWs are losing P10 for every dollar they remit. At $16 billion in annual remittances, OFWs are losing P160 billion worth of purchasing power in the economy. Aside from that, the cost goods and services have not come down with a strong peso and this has been a cause of imbalance," said Roxas noting that a strong peso makes our exports, tourism services, and call center jobs more expensive.

Roxas said it's time the government take a more direct hand in staving off the peso's rise considering that the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas had already lost P60 billion to keep the peso from rising further against the dollar.

"There is no central bank in the world that is capable of blocking a market trend. There is no way that they can impose a peso-dollar exchange rate or to fix it, they will go bankrupt," said Roxas. "We should put our money where our mouths are. We are always saying that OFWs are new heroes. That BPOs are the future of the service industry. That tourism and exports are our economic engines. They are suffering now, we should act soon to ensure they do not suffer further."

Roxas said there was no point in the government's macho stance in letting the peso seek its level with least government intervention because "at the rate our OFWs are sending money here and given the dynamics of the world market, the peso could be at the 30s range in a couple of months.'"

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, December 13, 2007
2nd Week of Advent
Lucy

1st Reading: Is 41:13-20
Gospel: Matthew 11:11-15

Jesus said to the crowds, "No one greater than John the Baptist has come forward among the sons of women, and yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven is something to be conquered and the unyielding seize it.

"Up to the time of John, there was only prophesy: all the prophets and the Law; and if you believe me, John is this Elijah, whose coming was predicted. Let anyone with ears listen!"

Commentary

Our God grasps hold of us and tells us not to fear even though we are described as maggots and worms (certainly not a flattering description). But we are given a redeemer who will be made into a thresher that is sharp and sure, ready to harvest and rejoice. It is our God who will care for the thirsty and hungry and turn every level of land into the next spacious place to dwell. Our God sees, knows what little we do, and will do what is necessary. The hand of the Lord is the body of Jesus.

And Jesus praises John the prophet as the greatest in history and yet the least born into the world of water/spirit/word and bread—the kingdom of God is greater than John! There has been violence since John (beheaded) and there will be violence towards those who belong to Jesus but if we heed the words of Jesus then we will see the fulfillment of all the promises of God in his Body, the Church, and in those who obey him. This is what God would like for a Christmas gift.

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Palace slams survey on corruption

From page A1

ing the source to find out what the product is. So if that premise is correct then you can imagine to what extent we must give credence to the survey," Ermita said at a news conference.

He said the commissioning of the survey could be part of destabilization efforts against the Arroyo administration.

"In boxing, it's called body punching. It's good that our contender is in good physical condition. What they cannot do with straight punching, they do with body punching," the executive secretary said.

Equal chance

Ana Maria Tabunda, Pulse Asia Inc. executive director, said on ANC cable channel that who commissioned the survey was irrelevant to the results.

Tabunda said Pulse Asia had given Ms Arroyo and the four former Presidents on the list "equal chance of being selected or not" by the respondents.

The survey, conducted by Pulse Asia Inc. from Oct. 20 to 31, showed that more Filipinos viewed Ms Arroyo and her administration as the "most corrupt" compared with former Presidents Joseph Estrada, Fidel Ramos, Corazon Aquino and Ferdinand Marcos and their respective administrations.

It also found that 45 percent of the respondents viewed the Arroyo administration as plagued with the " most intense" corruption allegations.

In the Senate, administration Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago said she would file a resolution calling for an investigation of Pulse Asia and other pollsters to compel them to reveal the parties that paid for their services.

Three questions

The survey asked the respondents three questions:

1. "In your opinion, which President is the most corrupt in the history of the Philippines?"

2. "In your opinion, under which administration has there been the most intense allegations of corruption?"

3. In your opinion, which President is the least corrupt or not corrupt in the history of the Philippines?"

Paid for by subscriber

Tabunda said these questions were paid for by a subscriber.

"But the fact that something is commissioned does not necessarily mean that the results will be biased because they will reflect the opinion of whoever paid for that portion of the survey," she told the INQUIRER.

The Pulse Asia executive said that even during elections, a candidate could pay for the whole cost of a nationwide survey.

"But if he is losing we tell him, 'You're losing.' So whether you commission it or not, we'll give you the results irrespective of what you want to see in the results," Tabunda said.

She noted that all surveys in market research were commissioned, "but if the product is not making it, the client is told: 'The product is being beaten by the competitor.'"

Skewed results

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye took issue with the sample size of the survey.

He said the results were "skewed" because the survey questioned just 1,200 respondents out of 84 million Filipinos.

Pulse Asia used multistage probability sampling for the survey, allowing it to get a representative sample of the population.

In a statement, Bunye said Ms Arroyo was taking the problem of corruption seriously, citing the programs that run after tax cheats and smugglers in revenue agencies, and the electronic procurement system in government.

He also noted that the government had made headway in going after corrupt officials, as shown by the increase in the conviction rate of the Sandiganbayan from 12 to 33 percent.

"(This) included high profile cases involving a former President and a ranking general," Bunye said in reference to former President Joseph Estrada, who had been convicted of plunder but has since been pardoned, and Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia.

Because of government's efforts at combating corruption, the country got "the equivalent of P1 billion" to further improve its campaign, Bunye said.

"Just last week, Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank praised the Philippines for being the first among borrowing countries in Asia in terms of data transparency," he said.

"We therefore vehemently challenge the survey results, which could have been influenced by a number of distorting factors such as the sample, possible leading questions and even the person or persons who commissioned the survey," Bunye said.

Tabunda said the interviewers were trained not to inject anything that would condition the respondents to answer in a certain way.

"These are very well-trained interviewers doing the survey. We are just reporting the results," she said.

Tabunda said Pulse Asia did not require the respondents to have first-hand experience with the five administrations.

"We just asked them, 'In your opinion, which President is the most corrupt in the history of the Philippines?' And then they were given options, five names.

"They could have easily said, 'No one among them.' They could have easily said, 'All of them' because we will note down those answers, especially if we have sizeable percentages saying that. But we have none of those answers," she said.

People remember

Michael Tan, chair of the UP Department of Anthropology, said people remembered the issues concerning Ms Arroyo because they were the most recent ones.

"But even if the Marcos era has been long gone, people still remember his mistakes. With time, it looks like Filipinos are more forgiving," Tan said.

Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano said Ms Arroyo would not have been perceived as the most corrupt if she allowed herself or her officials to be investigated for the corrupt deals.

For his part, Sen. Mar Roxas said people could not see the benefits of a strong economy because they never felt it.

"But they are certain about widespread corruption because this is what they see, hear about and experience in their daily lives," he said.

Based on perception only

In the House of Representatives, Majority Leader Arthur Defensor said the survey was based on perception "not on hard facts."

Palawan Rep. Abraham Mitra said corruption was a problem that the administration was taking seriously.

"All steps are being taken to reform the system, prosecute wrongdoers. (Anticorruption expert) Tony Kwok says that it would take us less time than Hong Kong to reduce corruption," Mitra said.

House Minority Leader Ronaldo Zamora said he considered the survey a validation of the adverse public opinion on corruption in government.

"Aside from being corrupt, the worst cases of human rights violations have been committed under her regime, even surpassing Marcos' record," said Rafael Mariano, chair of the militant peasant group Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas. *With reports from Norman Bordadora and Jerome Aning*

GMA now takes UN report on killings seriously; vows zero ...

From page A1

and the diplomatic corps.

She reiterated that her administration was not condoning extrajudicial killings, and that it had been implementing the recommendations of the Melo Commission that first looked into these cases.

Among these recommendations are expediting the prosecution of the cases and providing assistance to victims as well as more funding to allow for more investigators.

Ms Arroyo also said she had told the military that "if there are rogue elements, they must be brought to justice."

"They know, and we all know, that no person is above the law in this nation," she said, adding:

"Whether a former President, a member of the military, or an average citizen, all men and women in this nation are equal before the law. The death of any Filipino in pursuit of his or her right to political expression violates human liberty."

Addressing torture

Earlier, Commission on Human Rights (CHR) Chair Purificacion Quisumbing, who attended and spoke at the event, called for the crafting of laws including one that deals with the use of torture.

"You can't talk about human rights without addressing torture," Quisumbing told the President and her guests.

In her speech, Ms Arroyo vowed to bring to justice those behind the killings and to work with Congress for new laws to protect rights abuse victims, as recommended by Quisumbing.

She called on the nation to "leave behind its terrible legacy of political violence and clan vendettas."

'Appalling': 13 reports overdue

ON THE OTHER HAND, CHR COMmissioner Dominador Calamba III said the current human rights situation was "appalling."

At a forum organized by the Philippine Working Group for an Asean Human Rights Mechanism to address the issue, Calamba said the government had been remiss in its treaty reporting to the United Nations, with "13 reports overdue."

The reports are on the implementation of international covenants signed by the Philippines to address such issues as discrimination, forced disappearances and extrajudicial killings.

Calamba said the CHR was in total agreement with the final report of Alston, which stated in part that the Philippine military was in denial over the extrajudicial killings.

He pointed out that since the 1970s, particularly during the martial law era, "enforced disappearances have been a problem."

Calamba cited 383 killings brought to the CHR's attention, of which 145 were extrajudicial or political in nature.

At the same forum, lawyer Ricardo Sunga III said that for most victims of rights abuse, the martial-law era might have been dangerous times.

But "these times are just as dangerous," said Sunga, a rights consultant in the office of Rep. Lorenzo Tañada III, chair of the House committee on human rights.

Ms Arroyo pointed out that the number of political killings had dropped, and that the government was making headway in "the fight to put an end to the legacy of political violence."

"But we should not rest until we reach zero political violence," she said.

Ms Arroyo also said she was endorsing "all the recommendations and requests" made by Quisumbing, including measures that would protect the CHR's fiscal autonomy, strengthen its financial resources and give it quasi-judicial powers.

"A strong and independent commission is vital to the protection and promotion of human rights," she said, adding that she would ask the budget department to study how CHR savings "could be applied to other programs and salary augmentation rather than being returned to the National Treasury."

Lesser number

At the launch at the Supreme Court of a British-government-funded project to train judges in international law, Chief Justice Reynato Puno said there had been an apparent decrease in extrajudicial killings and forced disappearances since July, when various sectors convened for a Supreme Court-led summit to come up with solutions to the problem.

"It's a matter of statistics. I think the statistics will show ... a diminution of these extralegal killings and disappearances," Puno said when asked if the human rights situation had improved after the two-day summit.

Puno also said the writ of amparo from the high court, as well as the authorities' enforcement of it, had helped bring about the improved record:

"The writ ... is certainly a part of it. But I like to think that the other agencies of the government should be commended also for cooperating with the courts with the enforcement of the writ."

The Chief Justice expressed hope that the legislative branch would come up with laws on extrajudicial killings and disappearances to strengthen the writ of amparo.

"We hope that Congress will also enact the appropriate substantive laws in order to strengthen this procedural remedy," he said, adding:

"There is, for instance, in Congress, a bill making these extralegal killings and disappearances a specific right, one that will be covered not only by our usual laws on murders and homicides and kidnappings, but also by a special law, with the offense especially penalized."

Help from EU

The Philippines may expect help from European countries to improve the human rights situation.

In an interview at the launch, British Ambassador Peter Beckingham said the European Union (EU) and European Commission (EC) intended to meet with the Department of Foreign Affairs to discuss "specific support" to the Philippines concerning extrajudicial killings and human rights.

"We have some specific proposals... We hope to have a meeting with the DFA very soon about it," Beckingham said.

In a statement issued yesterday by Ambassador Alistair MacDonald, head of the EC delegation to the Philippines, the European Union reaffirmed its support for the efforts of the Philippine government and civil society to promote, uphold and protect human rights.

MacDonald said a European Parliament delegation that visited the Philippines last month had discussed human rights issues with Ms Arroyo and Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo, as well as representatives of civil society.

He said the delegation had conveyed the European Parliament's concerns on extrajudicial killings, although it welcomed the abolition of the death penalty in the country as well as the position of the Philippines and the Asean Summit regarding human rights violations in Burma.

Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner, member of the EC external relations committee, paid tribute to civil society members and human rights defenders as "indispensable partners of the EU in its fight for the full respect for human rights worldwide."

"As of this year, with the new European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, the EU has even better and more flexible means in its hands to help those who dedicate their lives to help others," she said. *With reports from Cynthia D. Balana and Jeannette I. Andrade*

Ex-Peru president sentenced to 6 years for abuse of authority

From page A1

misuse of state funds, illegal wiretapping and bribery of lawmakers.

Fujimori showed little emotion during Tuesday's proceedings—in contrast to Monday's tumultuous start of his trial on charges of human rights violations.

After the six-year prison sentence was read, Fujimori consulted quickly with his defense lawyer and then addressed the judge, saying he was appealing "partially" the sentence and the fine. He did not elaborate.

But Fujimori's daughter Keiko, a congresswoman for his party, attacked the ruling as she left the courtroom.

"This is really an unfair sentence," she said. "Before, it was a political persecution. Now it's a judicial persecution. Like 90 percent of the Peruvian people, I don't trust the judicial system."

Closed hearings

Tuesday's sentence for abuse of authority came after closed hearings before a single judge because it involved a minor charge. The trials are taking place at the police base on the eastern outskirts of Lima where Fujimori is being held.

The search of the apartment of Montesinos' wife was conducted without a court order.

ALBERTO FUJIMORI talks at the press room of the Special Court of the Supreme Court on Monday during his trial in Lima, Peru. He has been convicted for abuse of authority. He faces three other trials on charges that include murder, kidnapping, human rights abuses and corruption. AFP

Fujimori admitted ordering one of his military aides, an Army officer, to pass himself off as a prosecutor during the search. All searches in Peru require a court order and the presence of a prosecutor.

Fujimori justified his action by saying it was part of a nationwide manhunt for Montesinos after Swiss authorities accused his spy chief of money laundering.

At the time of the search, only days before Fujimori fled Peru, the interior ministry said plainclothes police had seized some 40 suitcases and 40 boxes filled with videos, books and documents from the apartment of Montesinos' wife, Trinidad Becerra.

Several days later Fujimori called reporters to the Government Palace and showed them seven watches and two heavy gold chains, which he said were worth about US$1 million. He said the pieces of jewelry had been seized during the search of Becerra's apartment.

Prosecutors, however, said they suspected Fujimori was seeking evidence that might have implicated him in Montesinos' illegal activities, but the ex-Peruvian leader denied that.

Prosecutors had sought a prison sentence of seven years, but defense lawyer Cesar Nakazaki had asked the court for a reduced sentence of four years, arguing that Fujimori was not the one who committed the crime but was simply the "instigator."

Other trials

On Monday, Fujimori went on trial on separate charges he authorized an Army death squad to kill leftist rebels and collaborators amid a government crackdown on a bloody Maoist insurgency.

His voice cracking in emotion, Fujimori told the three-judge panel that he had inherited a country in a state of collapse, wracked by terrorism and hyperinflation.

"My government rescued the human rights of 25 million Peruvians with no exceptions. If any detestable acts were committed, I condemn them, but they were not done on my orders. I reject the charges totally," he shouted on Monday.

After his trial for murder and kidnapping, Fujimori faces two more trials.

In one of these trials, he faces charges of illegally paying US$15 million in state funds to Montesinos, now jailed and accused of dozens of crimes, to get him to leave his post.

In the fourth trial, he faces charges of bribing opposition congressmen, illegal wiretapping and misuse of state funds to buy a television station to support his reelection campaign.

Fujimori has said he is innocent of those charges.

He was extradited in September to Peru from Chile. He had flown there from Japan in 2005, in the hope he would be extradited to Peru only on minor charges. *AP*

1.4-M gov't ...

From page A1

bonus of P6,000 per government worker.

"This year, because of the good economic situation, the President thought of giving (a higher) bonus," Andaya said.

Government employees also receive a 13th month pay.

Europe grants $20.6M Mindanao aid

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION announced yesterday it has approved $20.6 million in grants for rebuilding areas in the southern Philippines hit by decades of Muslim insurgency.

The grants, worth 14 million Euros will go towards improving governance, helping the region integrate in the international trading system and rebuilding Mindanao, which has been ravaged by decades of fighting between the government and Muslim rebel groups.

They will go to programs developed in consultation with the government and with civil society groups, Alistair MacDonald, European Commission delegation head said.

"The European Community is bent on helping the Philippines in its economic, social and political reform processes, by providing support to deepen dialogue on governance with and among all sectors of society, to promote trade and investment flows, and to help restore peace and security in Mindanao," he said.

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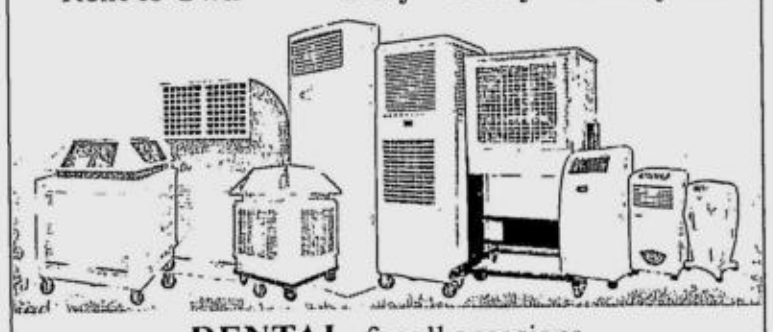
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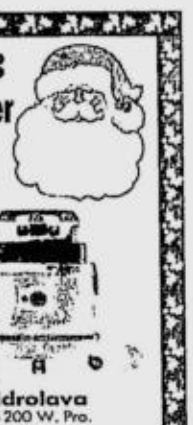
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REJECT A MORALLY BANKRUPT ARROYO ADMINISTRATION

The events of the past weeks have shown in unmistakable terms the deep and intense political crisis that continues to engulf the nation under the current Arroyo administration.

The incident at the Manila Peninsula is a stem reminder that there are still unresolved issues of legitimacy, corruption, human rights abuses and unprecedented abuse of power under the guise of upholding the rule of law. While there may be varying opinions on the Manila Peninsula incident, it is clear that the issues raised were all too familiar. That various groups and personages continue to protest these issues is a clear manifestation that the ruling administration has done little to address them .

What is also disturbing is that the government's response to dissent has been more repression and threats addressed to the citizenry. The images of media workers being hauled like criminals - and the imposition of a curfew, the first since Martial Law - reminds us that repression remains the principal response to dissent under this administration.

And despite claims of growth and development, and the pretense of a "good economist" in Malacañang, many of our countrymen still cry out for economic justice; for land, better wages and decent services. The economic crunch has in fact dampened whatever remaining holiday cheer there may be.

The crisis has gotten worse with many of our people going abroad because they see no hope in our country. Unless the above issues are satisfactorily addressed, we can expect the same turbulence, desperation and frustration to mark the remaining years of this administration.

As the year comes to an end and a new one is imminent, we are again called to renew our commitment to truth and justice. We are again called to stand together to call for accountability in government. We stand firm in rejecting a morally bankrupt Arroyo government as we strive to achieve national unity and renewal.

JOIN US ON DECEMBER 14, 4-7:00 PM, IN AN INTERFAITH ASSEMBLY FOR THE NATION AT THE PLAZA SULAYMAN IN FRONT OF THE MALATE CHURCH, ROXAS BLVD.

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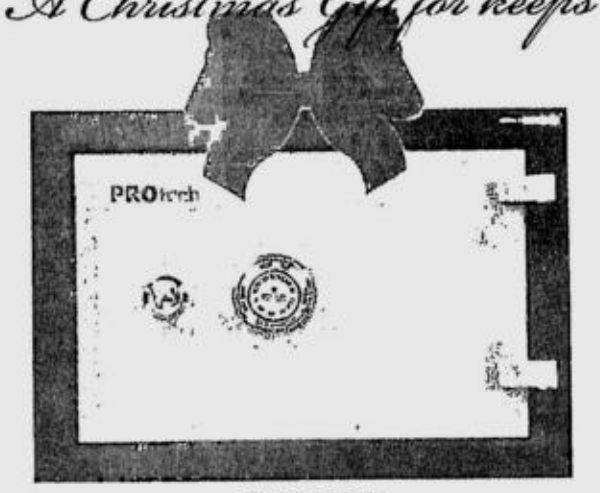

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Winning bidder plans IPO to raise fresh funds

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

MONTE ORO GRID RESOURCES, THE winning bidder for the 25-year concession to operate the national power grid owned by National Transmission Corp. (Transco), is mulling over a possible initial public offer (IPO) to raise fresh funds.

"We can build up equity or partly fund the acquisition through borrowings," A. Brown Co. Inc. chair Walter Brown told the INQUIRER.

A. Brown has an 18 to 19-percent stake in Monte Oro.

Other shareholders are Wealth Securities with 32 percent or 163.95 million shares, Campos Lanuza & Co. Inc. with 77 million shares and Lakeland Village Holdings as well as Evergrow Industries and Sureste Properties each with 4.9 percent or 25 million shares, documents with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) showed.

Shares of A. Brown however closed lower by 5.3 percent or 8 centavos yesterday to P1.42.

Stocks of port operator International Container Terminal Services Inc. (ICTSI) of powerful businessman Enrique Razon was also lower by 2.2 percent or P1 to P44.

Razon has a 2-percent interest in the Monte Oro Group.

Razon, who is close to President Macapagal-Arroyo and was treasurer of the administration coalition Team Unity in the May elections, is chair of ICTSI.

Macroeconomic factors

The stock market seemed to be banking on two other rival bidders for Transco in the early trading session led by San Miguel Corp. and Metro Pacific Investments Corp. as shares of both companies bucked the market's drop yesterday.

At the end of trading, warrants of Metro Pacific were the biggest gainers, climbing 14 percent to P2.85.

Common shares of Metro Pacific also closed higher by 1.1 percent or 5 centavos to P4.35.

This was despite an announcement after the market closed at 12:30 p.m. yesterday that the Metro Pacific Group's Italian partner for the Transco bid had pulled out of the bidding.

A spokesperson for Terna-Rete Electtrica Nazionale S.P.A of Italy told the INQUIRER that the company studied the "macroeconomic factors" surrounding the bid and decided to withdraw from the consortium led by Two Rivers Pacific Holdings Corp. of Metro Pacific chair Manuel Pangilinan.

Low risk, high returns

The Terna spokesperson did not specify which factors weighed on the company's decision the most, saying merely that in all of its investments, Terna favors a climate of "low risk and high returns."

Terna also did not comment when asked whether its decision was affected by questions over Two Rivers' citizenship.

"Again we based our decision on how the regulatory scenario is and the economic scenario in the country," the spokesperson merely said.

On the eve of the Transco bid, San Miguel Energy Corp., urged Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM) to probe legal issues over the nationality of Two Rivers in light of issues raised by a Nov. 9 letter by Perez Golangco Madrigal Andaya Law Office.

Manuelita V. Perez, a partner in the law firm, wrote PSALM and the SEC on Nov. 9 saying Two Rivers cannot be considered a Filipino corporation because its parent firm, Metro Pacific Investments Corp. (MPIC), which owns 99.99 percent of its capital, is not a Filipino company.

Perez cited a 2006 annual report by Hong Kong conglomerate First Pacific Co. Ltd. as stating that it has a 95.9-percent "economic or voting interest" in MPIC.

If such is the case, Perez said MPIC and Two Rivers are both foreign corporations.

Qualified bidder

In a statement yesterday, Two Rivers asserted that it was qualified to participate in the Transco bid.

"We deplore the attempts of certain parties to gain an unfair advantage or distract attention from their own weaknesses by calling into question our qualifications to bid for Transco," Two Rivers president and concurrently MPIC president Jose Ma. K. Lim said.

Class A shares of San Miguel, which are traded by local investors, jumped 8.9 percent to P55.

Class B shares, which can be bought and sold by foreign investors rose 7.8 percent to P55.50.

GMA pal wins Transco bid; senators seek probe

From page A1

described as the biggest privatization in the Philippines' history, involving power transmission lines with optic fiber broadband capability.

Sen. Jamby Madrigal said she would personally file a class action suit to nullify the auction for the 25-year concession to operate Transco's power grid, considered the crown jewel of Philippine energy assets.

"This has become a matter of personal survival. The President sacrificed the country's sovereignty to her greed and her cronies' greed, sacrificed economic independence, sacrificed social services, and sacrificed national security," Madrigal said.

A key member of the winning consortium is State Grid Corp., China's largest electricity provider. It ranks 29th in the Fortune Global 500 list of the world's largest companies by revenue this year.

"You don't have to be a fortune-teller to say that this is lutong macao," Madrigal said. "The impunity that the government has pushed this with her cronies' fingerprints all over it is the mark of disrespect for all opinion."

Resolution to probe

She said the victory of Razon, head of port operator International Container Terminal Services Inc. (ICTSCI), should prod the Senate blue ribbon committee to act immediately on her resolution calling for an investigation of the Transco bidding.

Madrigal has also linked Ms Arroyo's brother, Diosdado "Buboy" Macapagal Jr., and the Aboitiz family, a known administration ally, to Monte Oro.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said he would support any court action against the sale of Transco assets, citing the "brazenness" by which the administration had moved to favor business interests close to the President.

Conflict of interest

"Why can't they see the anomaly of it all? Standing by itself, it should be a shock to the conscience of anybody looking for good government," Pimentel said.

Pimentel previously said that Jose Ibazeta, president of Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM) which conducted the auction, was in a conflict of interest situation.

"Ibazeta obviously is an employee of Razon being a current director of companies in Razon's empire. It is a blatant display of arrogance to preside over bidding of an asset of the government where one of the bidders, and the eventual winner, is your employer," Pimentel said.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson said: "This deal has left no doubt that this country is one big corporation fronting for a Mafia-like organization."

San Miguel bid

The winning bid of Monte Oro narrowly beat the only other bid of $3.905 billion from the consortium led by San Miguel Energy, a unit of Philippine food and drinks giant San Miguel Corp.

Conspicuously absent were representatives of the two other pre-qualified bidders—the consortium of Two Rivers Pacific Holdings Corp. and Terna-Rete Electtrica Nazionale S.P.A. of Italy and the group of Citadel Holdings Inc. and Power Grid Corp. of India.

An industry source said that Citadel had decided to drop out of the bidding when its financial partner backed out.

A source close to Two Rivers told the INQUIRER the consortium was prepared to bid $4.2 billion for Transco, but withdrew at the last minute after pressure was brought to bear on its Italian partner.

In a statement, Two Rivers president and chief executive Jose Ma. Lim said the group could no longer join the Transco concession auction as its Italian partner Terna had withdrawn from the consortium.

Bad press

No reason was officially stated for Terna's sudden pullout. But the industry was rife with talk that the Italian firm may have been affected by the bad press that Two Rivers had been getting these past days, particularly those questioning the eligibility of the group.

Under the Transco bidding rules, bidders should be capable of forming a consortium that would meet the 60-percent Filipino ownership restrictions for grantees of a public utility franchise.

Two Rivers is allegedly not a Filipino company since its parent, Metro Pacific Investments Corp., is 95.9-percent owned by Hong Kong-based First Pacific Co. Ltd.

The San Miguel Energy consortium even went as far as asking PSALM to investigate Two Rivers' eligibility to bid.

La Costa protest

La Costa Development Corp, headed by nickel miner Salvador Zamora II and former Finance Secretary Roberto de Ocampo, earlier questioned the auction before a criminal court, alleging violations of the antigraft law.

A Makati Regional Trial Court has scheduled another hearing next week on La Costa's petition for a writ of preliminary injunction against PSALM. La Costa has said it was prepared to go all the way to the Supreme Court.

La Costa has announced it was prepared to bid as much as $6 billion for Transco, double that offered in a failed bid in February. But PSALM disqualified La Costa for its alleged failure to show that its Filipino partner in the consortium could not raise the required equity investment of $300 million. La Costa has dismissed this allegation.

Ibazeta shrugged off allegations of irregularities.

"We have all the documents, but it's still up to Congress to decide whether or not to grant a franchise to the winning bidder. And everything's so transparent, so how can it be said that this is lutong macaw?" he said in a press conference after the auction.

Franchise up to Congress

PSALM would take 30 business days to reevaluate all documents that the Monte Oro consortium submitted to ensure that it had complied with all the requirements set.

Monte Oro may then proceed to go to Congress to ask for a franchise to operate, maintain and expand the nationwide transmission grid, according to Ibazeta.

The Arroyo administration has been trying since 2003 to privatize Transco to boost state finances and modernize its creaking power sector. Yesterday's auction was the fifth attempt and the second this year.

Political uncertainty and doubts about the predictability of profits tripped up previous sale efforts but a new tariff system for Transco, in operation since last year, is supposed to make the 25-year license more lucrative for investors.

The grid, which needs about $850 million over the next five years for upgrades and expansion, was valued at P138 billion ($3.3 billion) in 2006.

With reports from Reuters

Saguisag girl falls at SEA Games but still inspires other athletes

From page A1

tually forced out of the tournament.

Still mourning

Her right knee gave way and she lay on the floor fighting off the pain. Although she had made the finals easily, her coaches knew when not to push it, and they withdrew her from the event.

Dulce Saguisag died last month in a vehicular accident that also severely injured her husband.

Caissa, a medallist in the 2005 SEA Games in Manila, was then tapering off from training. She and her siblings buried their mother without her losing focus on her upcoming stint at the SEAG.

Rene Saguisag, a former senator, has been discharged from hospital but is still recuperating from the mishap.

Caissa, her eyes moistening, politely begged off from talking about her mom, the former secretary general of the national gymnastics association.

"Let's not talk about it, sir," she told the INQUIRER at the Athletes Village. "I just hope my dad gets well soon."

Big tournament

But the young gymnast is not giving up on the sport—or at least not just yet.

Caissa said she would rest her knee before going back to serious training with an eye on competing in a big tournament in the United States in March.

That may be her final tournament, she said.

From there, it would be all school for Caissa, who's on a home study program and hopes to attend the University of the Philippines after high school.

Ermita says Christmas ceasefire uninterrupted

From page A1

Unlike in the years past, the ceasefire will be an "uninterrupted" one for the holiday season, according to Ermita.

In the past, the Somo lasted for a day or two, he said.

"It only goes to show that it looks like we have a good situation in the field that we can afford to have an uninterrupted ceasefire," Ermita said.

Prelude to peace talks

Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr., AFP chief of staff, wants a longer ceasefire as a prerequisite for holding peace talks with the NPA.

"As far as the insurgents, the communist terrorists are concerned, I even proposed (that) we go on a three-year ceasefire then we talk peace," Esperon said at the Manila Overseas Press Club (MOPC) forum on Wednesday night.

The rebels quit peace talks in 2004 over the government refusal to lobby for their removal from US and European lists of terrorist organizations. They also spurned an amnesty offer from Ms Arroyo earlier this year, vowing to continue their rural-based struggle to topple the government.

Rapidly dwindling

Esperon said he expected the decades-long communist insurgency to become inconsequential in two years because the rebel ranks were rapidly dwindling.

He estimated the number of rebels would be cut to 3,000 from 7,000 by 2009, one year ahead of a deadline set by President Macapagal-Arroyo for the military to defeat or significantly reduce the rebels.

The government has stepped up its offensive against insurgents over the past few years, but there has been no indication that the Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed wing, the NPA, are ready to back down.

"If we continue to allow the insurgency's protracted war, we might as well consider a war lost," Esperon said in a speech. "Aside from our economic losses, have we realized what we will lose if we let communism win over democracy?"

He said military and police operations in the countryside had dismantled rebel political and military structures and led to the arrests of top leaders.

He said security forces have reduced the number of guerrillas by an average of 1,000 each year, and he expects the number of insurgents to be cut to 3,000 by 2009.

At that number they "definitely cannot topple the government nor have the leverage to exact demands at the negotiating table," Esperon said.

Amnesty

He said communist rebels had bigger chances of obtaining amnesty than military adventurists like Navy lieutenant-turned-Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV and Army Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim.

A pardon for the renegade soldiers would "remain a political act," Esperon said.

He said the fact that the military went "full steam ahead" with the prosecution of the junior officers who staged a mutiny in 2003 and the 28 senior officers from the Philippine Marine Corps and the Army Scout Rangers implicated in the February 2006 power grab showed that the military was implementing "the full force of military law."

Demoralized

In his speech, Esperon said military adventurists did soldiery "a great disservice."

He said troops were "demoralized when they see how some rogue members attempt to grab power for themselves" and topple democracy while those in the frontlines "continue to sacrifice their lives for our people and democratic institutions."

Esperon branded communist insurgents and renegade soldiers as "enemies of the people."

"There isn't much difference between insurgents and military adventurists," he said.

"They both seek to destroy our democratic way of life and grab power for themselves through armed uprising," he added.

But Esperon acknowledged that the rebel soldiers had raised "legitimate grievances" which, according to him, the military "continuously address."

With a report from AP

Bush loses close run for 'Foot in Mouth'

From page A1

Mouth" award on Tuesday from the Plain English campaign.

McClaren was hailed for a supreme example of gobbledegook in talking about star player Wayne Rooney: "He is inexperienced but he's experienced in terms of what he's been through."

George W. Bush came second for "All I can tell you is that when the governor calls, I answer his phone."

Plain English Campaign spokesperson Ben Beer told Reuters: "We thought it was a bit obvious to honor Bush as he comes up with them every day."

Every year, Beer's pressure group hands out a raft of awards mocking incomprehensible jargon in a battle to clear the linguistic fog that so often envelops the English language.

McClaren, fired as manager after the team failed to qualify for the Euro 2008 championships, is in distinguished company. Past winners include model Naomi Campbell, actor Richard Gere and former US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld.

No shortage of entrants

There is never a shortage of entrants sent in by people baffled by bureaucratic language and befuddled legalese.

"We get 40 to 50 examples a week, mostly from British documents. The media, including advertising and marketing, is riddled with insider jargon," Beer told Reuters.

Offering the best way to obliterate meaningless verbosity, Beer said: "Thinking before you write is the main thing and then rereading what you have written."

That message clearly fell on deaf ears at Coleraine railway station in Northern Ireland.

The station sign read: "Every autumn a combination of leaves on the line, atmospheric conditions and prevailing damp conditions lead to a low adhesion between the rail head and the wheel which causes services to be delayed or even cancelled."

Shoe repatriation area

London's Gatwick Airport got 10 out of 10 for brevity but came bottom of the class for clarity for one of its signs:

"Passenger shoe repatriation area only."

The campaign was founded in 1979 by Chrissie Maher who only learned to read and write at the age of 14. Her jargon watchers now pounce on verbal excesses by officialdom and stage classes for bureaucrats, bankers and lawyers.

Campaign organizers even sent two "language policemen" on a global tour from India to South Africa and the United States to teach officialdom the best way to abandon the gobbledegook.

Even so, Beer does not despair.

"There has been an improvement over the years but there is a long way to go. This is the 29th year of the campaign. There is no chance of us being extinct anytime soon," he said. *Reuters*

HOSTAGE FOR 6 WEEKS

Pirates free 9 RP sailors

NINE FILIPINO SAILORS WHO were part of the crew of a Japanese tanker that was hijacked by pirates off the coast of Somalia in East Africa, have been released after being held hostage for six weeks and will return home soon, foreign affairs officials said yesterday.

Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo said all 22 crew members of the Golden Nori, which was seized on Oct. 28, were "safe and in good physical condition" after being released earlier Wednesday.

Esteban Conejos, the undersecretary for migrant affairs, said the pirates had left the ship and a US-led multinational naval force would escort the tanker into international waters. It will then sail into the port of Dubai under the control of its Filipino captain, Restituto Bulilan.

From Dubai, the Filipino seamen will be repatriated to the Philippines and are expected to arrive in Manila on Dec. 18.

Romulo thanked those involved in the rescue of the nine Filipinos who included aside from Bulilan, Melchor Cayabyab, chief mate; Loreto Quiles, second mate; Raymundo Panaligan, third mate; Mario Ocenar, chief engineer; Adelino Amparo, first engineer: Carlito Lotoc, second engineer; Laureano Villanueva, buson; and Ismael Perez, chief cook.

"The Philippine government expresses its deep gratitude to the ship owners, international shipping authorities, and participants in the multinational naval efforts to secure the hijacked vessel, for the safe release of the crew," Romulo said.

No word on ransom

He said that family members of the Filipino seamen have thanked the government for its efforts in seeking the release of the crew members.

On Monday, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said the pirates were threatening to kill the crew if unless a $1 million ransom was not paid.

An official in Kenya told the Agence France Press it was unclear if a ransom had been paid.

Conejos said: "We have no information on that. We look to the ship owners to resolve such issues. We have no details of the contact [with the hijackers]. The government maintains the policy of not negotiating with hijackers."

The 6,253-ton tanker, carrying crew members were from Burma, the Philippines and South Korea and up to 40,000 tons of highly explosive benzene, was hijacked on Oct. 28 on dangerous waters off Somalia's coast.

Conejos said the release was the "earliest effected" of such incidents in Somalia. He said a similar incident last year took three months to resolve. Hijackings and kidnappings in Somalia were resolved in two to six months, he said. *Cynthia D. Balana and AFP and AP*

RP condemns attack on UN

THE PHILIPPINES YESTERDAY joined the world in condemning the terrorist car bomb attacks that struck the offices of the United Nations in Algeria on Tuesday, killing more than 45 people, including several UN staff members, and wounding scores of others.

"The Philippine Government expresses its strong condemnation of the terrorist attacks in Algeria this morning that left many people dead, including several UN staff members," Social Welfare and Development Secretary Esperanza Cabral told the 62nd General Assembly. The Department of Foreign Affairs released the statement shortly after the attack, which was claimed by an Algerian militant group with links to al-Qaida.

"These attacks are unacceptable and those behind this crime should be brought to justice," said Cabran, who is in New York as head of the Philippine Delegation for the Commemorative High Level Plenary Meeting Devoted to the Follow Up to the Outcome of the Special Session on Children, where she co-chairs one of the panel discussions.

Ambassador Hilario Davide Jr., Philippine Permanent Representative to the United Nations, said it was the second such incident that targeted the UN since the 2003 car bombing of the UN headquarters in Baghdad that killed 22 people, including United Nation's High Commissioner for Human Rights, Sergio Vieira de Mello, who was there as the UN's special envoy for Iraq. *Cynthia D. Balana*

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2007

ISSN 0116-2642 INQUIRER Vol. 23 No. 5

Email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph Website: www.inquirer.net/opinion

OPINION

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THE PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, INC. has its business and editorial offices at
•Chino Roces Ave corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City
•P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City
•Our telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments
•Editorial Fax 897-4793 / 897-4794 •Advertising 897-4807
•Circulation 523-5570
•Subscription Hotline 896-6000

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Violent irony

EDITORIAL

ANXIOUS TO PREVENT ANOTHER EMBARRASSing "walkout"—or maybe we should call it a "walkabout"—by Magdalo mutineers, the authorities deployed a thousand soldiers to secure last Tuesday's resumption of the Oakwood mutiny trial in Makati City.

"There was enough force prepared for any contingency. We won't allow anything to happen," the new military chief for Metro Manila, Maj. Gen. Fernando Mesa, said. His spokesman had earlier identified the main units enforcing security at the trial: the 48th Infantry Battalion from Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija and the 750th Combat Group of the Philippine Air Force. Elements from the Southern Police Command and the Philippine National Police Custodial Unit also took part.

Yesterday's INQUIRER report drew a vivid picture: "The lobby on the fourth floor [of the new City Hall building, where Regional Trial Court Branch 150 is located] was rendered a sea of differently colored uniforms—the SWAT men in black, the regular police in blue, the security guards in white and blue, the Army in light camouflage green, the Air Force in dark blue or light blue, the Navy in brown, and the Marines in dark camouflage."

For good measure, the Magdalo officers who abruptly walked out of the courtroom on Nov. 29 were forced to wear handcuffs throughout the proceedings, while an armored personnel carrier patrolled the street.

All this, to secure the return to a civilian courtroom of what the commander in chief herself called "a few desperate men."

Undeniable overkill, but then this is the way the Arroyo administration prefers to conduct its business. It prefers to respond with a massive show of force, when force is available. Recall the deployment of thousands of troops and policemen to temper the street demonstrations after the State of the Nation Address in 2005, the first after the Garcillano tapes circulated.

But the administration also has a track record of using certain events as a rationalization for taking extraordinary action. Recall the long aftermath of the Betty Chua Sy kidnap-slay in 2003, when seemingly dozens upon dozens of alleged kidnappers were captured and prosecuted for allegedly taking part in the same crime. Or recall the insertion of the military into the newsrooms of the Tribune and a couple of television networks, as a consequence of the state of emergency declared in 2006. This administration has not been shy about using overwhelming force, or the projection of massive force, to meet its objectives.

We have no quarrel with the need to secure the courtroom at the resumption of the Magdalo trial; at the same time, we do not wish to engage in a numbers game, arguing just how many soldiers are needed to guard "a few desperate men." But we do think that the deployment of a thousand troops was both over-compensatory and tactical: The administration wanted to live down the embarrassment of the security lapses that allowed the "walkout" to happen, and at the same time it wanted to use the show of force to pursue other objectives.

The irony, however, is that Tuesday's show of force only reminded us that, under the Arroyo administration, the military exercises an inordinate influence. The Oakwood mutiny and the Peninsula Manila caper were put down—decisively, deservingly—because the democratic project will not countenance a military junta.

But look where we are now: an executive secretary and former general who will not meet with protesting farmers because he distrusts the drama behind the protest, an Armed Forces chief of staff who engages in a running battle with the courts and with representatives of the United Nations, a controversial ex-general who continues to give lectures on the controversial counterinsurgency strategy associated with him, a PNP chief who takes the offensive in the administration's war of attrition with media.

Many of the Arroyo administration's legacies-in-the-making have a military or police component. Not coincidentally, many of the administration's top officials come from the military or the police. That makes us wonder: Was that show of force to secure the courtroom in oppositionist Makati last Tuesday meant to guard civilian institutions, or intimidate them?

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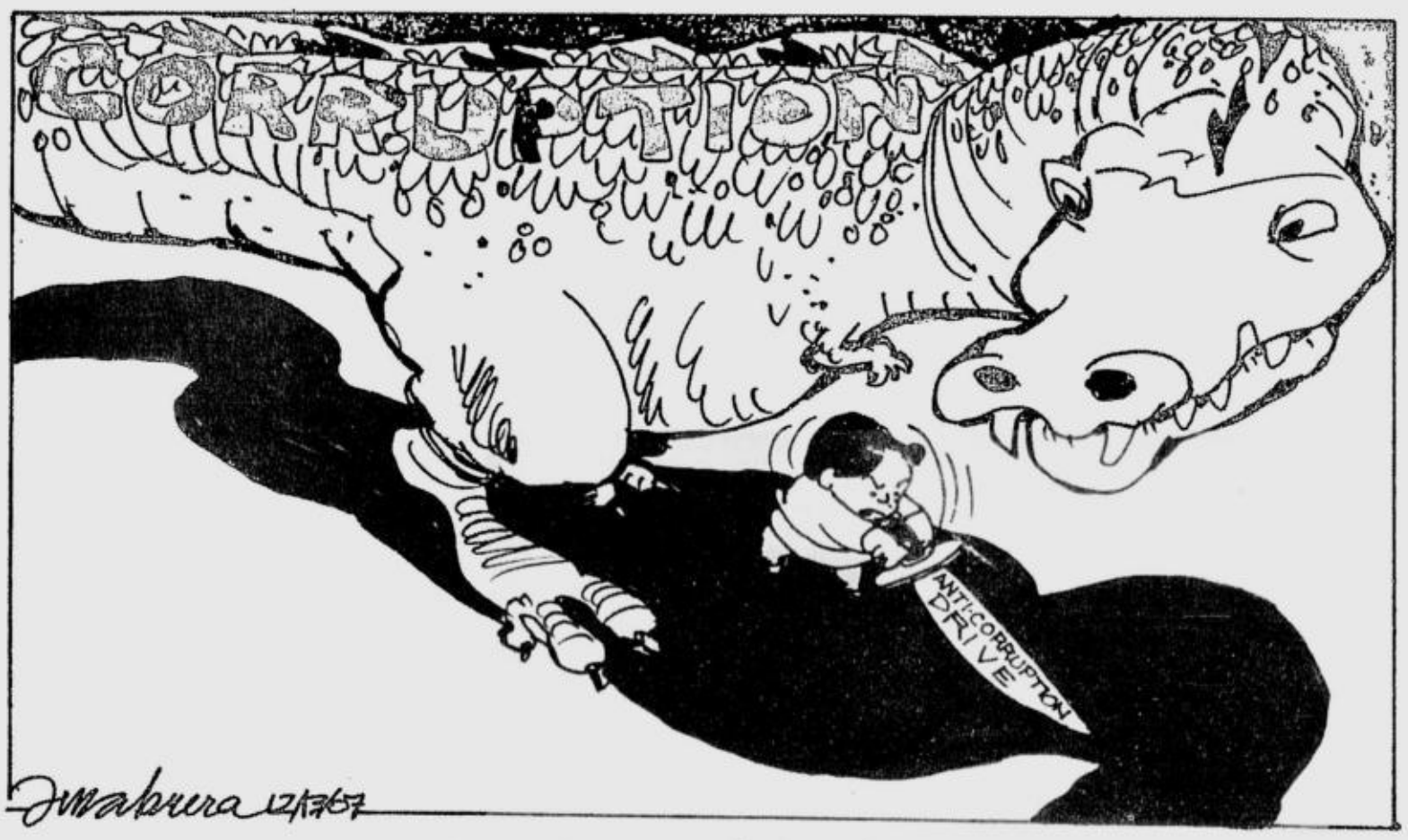

Slaughter of the birds

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

"STASH THAT PHOTO QUICK BEFORE THE website is pulled down." What photo? The "Massacre of the Birds," answers Wild Bird Club of the Philippines' Michael Lu.

Grisly snapshots of shot birds, displayed on the Internet by the Bacolod Air Rifle Hunting Club and other groups, sparked the drive to muster 10,000 signatures to curb this slaughter. The petition "requests media to cover shocking activities of these bands," Lu explains. Public revulsion may prod the government to enforce RA 9147. On paper, this law protects wildlife. Neglect renders it inutile.

Routine browsing of the Net by Josef Sagemuller sparked the club's infuriated protest. "Nothing prepared (us) for the 'Quarry' and 'Photos' section of Bacolod Air Rifle Hunting Club's ghastly website," says Lu. "The photos displayed hundreds of slaughtered doves, mallards, whistling ducks and snipes."

"It was unbelievable," the petition says. "One man in the pictures has more dead ducks around his neck than we've ever seen in the wild."

The same carnage is repeated by clubs in Isabela, Albay, Palawan, Cotabato, etc. They boast in other websites: from geocities "Birds We Hunt" to airgun blogs. "This screaming injustice is illegal," the petition adds.

Of course, it is. But in this country, "the illegal we do immediately," to paraphrase Henry Kissinger. "The unconstitutional takes a little longer."

Scientists estimate that the Philippines has 580 bird species. They range from the Philippine eagle to the new-to-science gail, discovered in Babuyan Islands in May 2004 by British and Filipino scientists, led by Carmela Espanola. They found 200 pairs of these unique flightless birds, reports Forktail, the journal of Asian ornithology.

Like rivers, birds make up a unique and sensitive early warning system. When rivers dry up, or birds disappear, it signals that "the environment is under such stress that species which lived in them for thousands of years, can no longer survive," the Philippines Red Data Book notes.

Birds curb insect infestation and scatter seeds. But they run a gauntlet of official disdain, shrinking forest habitats, pollution, traps—and airguns. A University of British Columbia study warned a decade ago: "If the present rate of hunting persists in the shrinking North Negros Forest Reserve, 20 percent of trees would not regenerate."

Deforestation saw "a number of bird species disappear from Cebu, Negros, Panay and Mindoro," a United Nations study noted. "Of highest priority for conservation are Indonesia's Lower Sundas, Eastern Himalayas, Luzon (especially Mindoro)."

Negros' primary forest cover is less than 4 percent. There, the tube-nosed fruit bat is probably down to one percent of its original population, says Chicago's Field Museum. In denuded Mindoro, a shrew, three unusual rodent species and at least two fruit bats listed in the 1997 Philippine Red Data Book are among those critically threatened.

Cebu is the country's most thoroughly deforested island. Once, it had 14 species and subspecies of birds found nowhere else in the world. Three of these are now extinct and, as Viewpoint noted on Feb. 17, 2004, "they are now numbered among the 'feathered desaparecidos.'"

"All but one of those still living have fewer than 100 individuals in the entire population... One is the exquisite Cebu flowerpecker. It's the most endangered species of bird in the world. Only four individuals are known to be alive." Unless hunters got to them since.

Destruction of rain forests, plus hunters, may have doomed these birds. "Overall, the Philippines today has the most severely endangered plant and animal communities on earth," Conservation International points out. "It (ranks) first in the world for the number (40) of endangered and critically endangered unique bird species."

We also hold this added distinction: "The Philippines is third highest in the world (after Indonesia and Brazil, which are more than 20 times larger) for the number of globally threatened bird species." Among these, 172 are "endemic" or unique to the Philippines. And 75 are listed as endangered.

"Most birds today barely survive in a narrow band of low-land forest around a few mountain peaks," Conservation International notes. "Illegal logging and clearing for subsistence farms cut that forest band ever thinner. In some cases, the damage is greater, sadly definitive and irreversible."

And air guns blast the survivors.

The Philippine bare-backed bat is now extinct. "It is one of the first species to test, and verify, the horrible prediction of impending extinction for one-third to two-thirds of the species of mammals unique to the Philippines," says Conservation International.

Do these stark facts mean anything to these hunters? We cannot wait to find out, says Lu. He urges all to save those grisly website photos before outrage moves the authors to sweep them under the rug. Those who would like to make common cause can sign on. Their petition is available on this website address: http:www.thepetitionsite/1/revolting-local-bird-massacre-website.

Perhaps one of the more poignant comments on this "massacre of the birds" can be found in the graduation address that National Scientist Dioscoro Umali delivered at the University of the Philippines just before his death:

"Your children will no longer thrill, as we once did, to the heart-stopping dive of a hawk. We've stripped the land of its beauty. And the bitter tragedy is: the victims are our grandchildren—flesh of our flesh, bone of our bone."

* * *

E-mail: juanlmercado@gmail.com

Free, but . . .

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I WASN'T JUST THE ONLY NON-MUSLIM IN the program I went to a couple of weeks ago in the United Kingdom. I was also the only one (of eight) whose country enjoys a free press.

Pakistan still reels from Pervez Musharraf's martial law and though he has promised to lift it as president, nobody expects dramatic leeway in journalistic reporting any time soon. Bangladesh, as a friend of mine who writes a newspaper column there told me, was freer in previous years, but not so lately after the caretaker government of Fakruddin Ahmed declared emergency rule last January. And various restrictions on the press, political and religious, apply in Turkey, Jordan and Egypt. The Philippines was enviable from that perspective and my friends did not care to hide their envy.

It was true, I said. We had a free press, which for all its faults—most of them had the impression our reportorial standards were not particularly high—was something Filipinos, journalists or not, could be proud of. Two things, however, I said, ought to be pointed out about that free press. (I use "press" to refer to media generally.)

The first is that that press freedom owes to the press and not to the government. My reason for saying that is that when people say a country enjoys a free press, they normally attribute it to the liberalism or magnanimity of government and not to the fortitude or vigilance of the press. They normally attribute it to the willingness of the government to tolerate criticism and not to the determination of the press to brook no fetter.

The recent events in this country should sufficiently dispel that notion. Twice already in the last couple of years, the current regime has tried to muzzle media, finding in the attempts by some groups to challenge it an excuse to do so. The first was early last year, after Danilo Lim's aborted "withdrawal of support" when PP 1017 put the country under a state of emergency and imposed restrictions on the press. The press refused to be cowed, defying the restrictions almost as soon as they were laid down. I myself suspect that if the press had hesitated there, government would have gone on to make life miserable for it.

The second was just a couple of weeks ago when the police made it a point to show it would give rebels and media alike no quarter. Like biblical rain which falls on the good and the bad, Malacañang's wrath would fall on the innocent and the guilty. Again, the press rose at once to denounce it in editorials and TV commentaries. The authorities have since backtracked from their demands on TV reporters in particular surrendering their tapes to them.

That is not to speak of the libel charges the First Gentleman filed against a score of journalists, which the offending journalists responded to by offending him some more in the form of a counter-suit. Mike Arroyo eventually withdrew his case. But again I suspect that had the press been timid in both cases, government would have been emboldened to raise the iron fist on it.

The second point that ought to be raised about press freedom in this country is far more subtle and interesting. We do enjoy press freedom, notwithstanding the massacre of journalists in the countryside over the last couple of years, which has been curbed only by the loud protests of the international press community over this country's "culture of impunity." The murder of the journalists, cause for monumental concern as it is, has certainly not dampened the spirits of the national press, which continues to expose and oppose, exorcise and criticize, perorate and vituperate. The sheer volume of scandals it has exposed in the latter half of this year alone testifies to its vibrancy in that respect.

The power of the free press is that it is able to expose the truth—or a reasonable facsimile thereof—about the way we live, not least about how we are governed, and by doing so ensures a better quality of it. But that power is based on a couple of premises. One is that by exposing wrongdoing, the press is able to sufficiently embarrass those who commit it, enough to compel them to resign and/or slink away from public sight. Two is that by exposing wrongdoing, the press is able to rouse the public to violent indignation, enough to force wrongdoers to resign and/or slink away from public sight whether they want to or not.

That is the case for example today in Britain, where the press has sufficiently embarrassed government over the issue of illegal campaign contributions, and stoked public outrage over it, twice in a row in less than a year. That is the case for example in Japan where a prime minister has resigned because of charges of corruption and a minister of agriculture has hanged himself to spare his family the shame of it.

That is not the case in our country, and there's the rub. The problem is not that we do not have a free press or that the direst threats are poised against it. The problem is that we have a press that is free to expose scandal after scandal, but the scandalous are no longer bothered by it and the public is no longer scandalized by it. Elsewhere in the world, Christian or Muslim, tyrants muzzle the press to stop the rot about them from being bruited about and sparking a public outcry. Here, there's no need to. Public officials do not particularly care to be called crooks, and the public does not particularly care to be called citizens. It's all very well to be free to shame wrongdoers particularly in high places. But what if the wrongdoers in high places are just as free to be shameless? It's all very well to have the power to damn the damnable. But what if the public has resigned itself only to powerlessness?

Sometimes you wonder which is better—the attentiveness of repression or the blitheness of freedom.

GMA safely ensconced until 2010

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO CAME OUT in a recent Pulse Asia survey being regarded by over 40 percent of the population as "the most corrupt president," even more corrupt than the dictator Ferdinand Marcos and the only president convicted of corruption, Joseph Estrada. There may be those who will argue that the perception is grossly exaggerated inasmuch as nothing could beat the corruption of the Marcos regime, with billions stashed away in foreign accounts. While it's true that the Arroyo administration has been hounded by a lot of corruption issues involving Palace cronies and Cabinet members, it cannot be denied that the perception of being the most corrupt stems in large part from the inordinately large attention devoted by media to these issues.

* * *

During the Marcos regime, there was strict censorship. Tales of fabulous wealth stashed abroad were spun by the "mosquito press" in its twilight years, but its reach was limited. In the Estrada years, the anti-Erap sentiment erupted full blast only in the months following Chavit Singson's exposé and the Senate trial. Until then there were only whispers of midnight deals cooked up by his Chinoy cronies, such as those involving pension funds, and allegations of smuggling by mistresses, which were never scrutinized as meticulously as current controversies are now. In GMA's case, the largely anti-administration media have thrived on exposés spun from endless hearings held by the opposition-dominated Senate.

* * *

In a recent conversation on GMA's post-Peninsula fate, I opined (and this view is shared by some observers) that despite rebellions, coup and impeachment attempts and calls for her resignation, GMA will be safely ensconced in power until 2010. I suppose this will ruin Christmas for the GMA haters, but this is the reality. One reason is that political parties are already gearing for the next elections. Another is that citizens are fatigued by efforts to oust her and just want to get on with their lives. Let's hope that in these last two and a half years, GMA will devote herself to truly meaningful governance, stamping out the corruption plaguing her administration and finishing the projects she has launched. It's precious time that shouldn't be wasted.

* * *

I normally object to renaming streets as it affects our people's sense of history. But the renaming of Florida Street in Ermita to Maria Ylagan Orosa Street is truly meritorious, for she was an exceptional woman from a distinguished family (to which also belongs National Artist for Dance Leonor Orosa Goquinco and Star's famed music critic Rosalinda "Baby" Orosa). The daughter of Simplicio Orosa and Julianna Ylagan of Taal, Batangas, Maria earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in pharmaceutical chemistry from Washington University in 1919 but opted to give up a job there as assistant state chemist to return to her native country. Prior to the renaming of Florida Street, the late President Carlos P. Garcia officially declared Nov. 29 "Home Extension Day" to coincide with her birthday. Both acts of government were in gratitude for her invaluable pioneering innovations and experiments in plant utilization, food preservation and canning since 1935, which have incalculably enriched the Pinoy diet for over six decades and continue to serve as a mine of scientific data until this day. The more than 700 recipes she prepared and kitchen-tested have likewise enriched countless cookbooks.

* * *

A passionate nationalist, Maria utilized native vegetables and fruits in food preparation to minimize the importation of food products, e.g., native cassava as substitute for wheat flour and *calamansi*, mango and "*santolada*" concentrates in place of bottled foreign drinks. Before Del Monte ever thought of making vinegar from pineapple, she was doing it before World War II. The products she came up with to help the people, especially during the war years, were infinite and beneficial, e.g., vitamin B-1 or thiamin-rich rice bran for nursing mothers suffering from beri-beri, powdered coconut flour for biscuits and cookies, and agar from seaweed. She pioneered in the dehydration of food stuffs and pickling of vegetables. She also devised a process of canning food for the guerrillas and evolved "magic food" from powdered soy beans to feed the war's hungry.

As head of the Bureau of Plant Industry's Plant Utilization Division, Maria, who was a captain in Marking's Guerillas, kept 400 stranded students in Manila employed and fed, while sending food to the soldiers and foreign internees and patients in various camps and hospitals. When peace settled, she harnessed her phenomenal energies to help the citizenry rehabilitate their lives through the Home Extension Service she founded. Unfortunately, during the Allied reconquest, Maria steadfastly refused to evacuate to Batangas with her family, saying, "I cannot abandon my work." She died in the line of duty on Feb. 13, 1945, hit twice by shrapnel from friendly fire.

* * *

The latest socio-civic involvement of the SM Foundation of the Henry Sy family is in educational development, manifested mainly in building schoolhouses, providing scholarships for the poor and book donations for barangay and provincial libraries and textbooks for fourth to sixth class municipalities nationwide. In the school and library assistance program SM has formed a partnership with Bato-Balani Foundation wherein the latter will help solicit books for the SM Foundation's "Donate-A-Book" program based in its various malls around the country. This pet project of SM top executive Tessie Sy-Coson is meant to address the shortage of books in public schools and cultivate interest in reading. This year alone, SM's book project has collected some 252,000 books and reading materials mostly from suppliers of SM Malls, mall tenants and shoppers. More on this laudable project next time.

Angels without wings

YOUNG BLOOD

Lala Abes

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

"YOU KNOW YOUR GUARDIAN ANGELS WILL BE SAD IF you lie to teacher," I told my nursery kids one time after I saw crayon marks on their tables. Right then and there, one of my pupils said: "I'm sorry teacher, it is me!"

That brought me back to my childhood. I remembered hearing this from my teachers, too.

In church, they speak about angels, too. For one reason or another, we grow up believing in angels. When a person joins God in Heaven, he becomes an angel to the people he has touched.

A few months ago, I was in Singapore to visit my niece Erin, who underwent a liver transplant at Gleneagles Hospital. I was struggling with a lot of worries. But nothing compared to the pain Erin, my sister, brother-in-law and the rest of our family were going through. I thought it would be self-centered to focus on my own anguish. I stayed with my family, and made sure I was not left alone.

A few days before we left Singapore, Papa asked me to go with him to a nearby mall. He handed me $50 and told me I could stroll around and buy anything I wanted. While he was enjoying his coffee, I went to Borders (a bookstore).

I love reading books, but at that time I did not have any book in mind. Then, I noticed a pink Bible. Without hesitation, I bought it. The Bible cost almost $50. I remembered my uncle, Bishop Ambo David, reminding us always about the importance of reading the Bible, and what it can do to our lives.

True, reading the Bible made me realize a lot of things. But I was still hurting. We all get hurt, and we need time to sob and mourn.

That night, feeling the need to be alone, I went down to the lobby of the hospital and sat on a couch. Then as I was about to start crying, I heard someone bursting in tears. She was a beautiful woman, perhaps a couple of years older than me. She was holding a cell phone.

I approached her and asked, "Are you OK? Do you need someone to talk to?"

She was a complete stranger to me, yet I felt sorry for her. And right there and then, I thought I might be luckier than her, and that I should be thankful for what I had. After a while, she walked away, still sobbing.

The following morning, I woke up feeling more calm and secure. I was thankful that the woman had become an "angel" to me that night. She saved me from my distress even if I barely knew her.

Anyone can be an angel. Every day, we meet them in unexpected situations. Unfortunately, we often fail to see them even if they leave us with a deep impression. And they can be anyone, like Erin, my parents, friends, the people we have hurt or who have abandoned us—even strangers, like the woman in the hospital.

Lala Abes, 25, is a graduate of Miriam College and works as a preschool teacher at Pediamorphosis House.

The light of the home

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

THIS BOOK CONVINCES ME THAT NO MOTHER, if it could be helped, should ever leave her family to work abroad for a long, long stretch of time. That is not the book's expressed objective and neither is it trying to find economic solutions to stop the endless stream of mothers leaving for jobs far away from their homes. But solutions to the collateral damage are in the offing.

"Nawala ang Ilaw ng Tahanan: Case Studies of Families Left Behind by OFW Mothers" tells us what happens when the mother is away for long. The title alludes to mothers as light and translates as "the light of the home has gone." That description of the state of affairs in the domestic front came from the families left behind themselves. They know what it is like, they remember the day the light went out.

The little book is a compilation of case studies by psychotherapist and prolific book author Ma. Lourdes Arellano-Carandang, and psychologists Beatrix Aileen Sison and Christopher Carandang. Ten OFW families are featured, each of them with the individual profiles of fathers and children (and mothers in some cases), their feelings, world views, hopes and problems, as well as how they cope and find solutions. Plus more solutions, but this is getting ahead of the review.

The cases are presented in a simple, straightforward manner, meaning they are easy reading. They are not written in a literary or featurized journalism style with fancy phrases and colorful details.

The approach used is the family-systems approach with a clinical-phenomenological method, which means going into the inner dynamics of the families and even into the realm of feelings. Projective techniques such as drawings also help.

These are families with real names, nicknames and faces, each one different from the other, but with so many commonalities in the way they cope with the absence of a most important member of the family: the mother. Yes, first and foremost, the mother (as the title says), not simply the wife.

After reading all the case studies, I could see that it is as mother that "*ilaw ng tahanan*" is missed. It is the absence of his children's mother that the husband must deal with first. And so if the case studies give much attention to husbands (including their own growing-up years), it is in order to show how they cope with the burden of parenting that is thrust upon them.

"*Natay*" is how some left-behind fathers refer to themselves, with some self-deprecating humor, for sure. "*Na*" from *nanay* or mother and "*tay*" from *tatay* or father. Oh, but if I may digress, I had done a story on a left-behind husband-father who performed his dual role with aplomb, with nary a trace of self-pity.

But it is the children—yes, the individual children—who feel their mother's absence in a very individual way. The eldest adolescent, the middle child, the one sent away to live with a grandma, the young ones who couldn't remember the day their mother left, the baby of the family—each one feels the absence in his or her own way. Each one acts out feelings, copes differently.

This is not a case of a mother permanently gone because of death or separation. This is a case of she is there but she is not there. Ambivalent and mixed feelings are to be expected.

In the Baltazar family, it is the adolescent who expresses the conflict: *malungkot na masaya*, (sad but happy). "(The daughter) longs for her mother but appreciates the money her mother sends. She copes with the help of her best friend, TV, sports, school and chores. She wishes her father were strong, '*matatag*.' She sees through his 'I'm perfect' veneer."

The Fernandez family has been able to adjust well mainly because of the father's openness to change and his willingness to take over the domestic front. Add to that Arcadio Fernandez's stable and loving relationship with his wife.

Daughter Jeralyn, 16, feels good that her father constantly asks him how she is doing ("*palaging kinokumusta*"). She feels the great optimism and this has helped her cope.

But there are problem husbands, as there are problem fathers. Men who can't cope and who take to drinking, gambling and even physically hurting the children.

The Lirios are perhaps the most problematic. A son, Gio, feels resentment and does not appreciate his mother's sacrifice. "He thinks that her staying with the family instead of leaving is a bigger sacrifice. NOT to leave is a bigger sacrifice than to leave... His way of coping is through friends, school and his music."

A whole section is devoted to analyses of situations, highlighting the coping mechanisms that work positively and why, what should be encouraged (expressive activities like art, play, etc.), what should be discouraged (expensive toys, obsession with gadgets and games). What is the role of the school, the church and the community?

It must be added here that a number of mothers in the cases presented left on such short notice, leaving their children instantly sad and lost and without understanding the reason for leaving. What could be worse than this? And if there is no deep and caring relationship between the father and the children, what happens next?

One of the suggestions raised in the book is the setting up of support groups for fathers at the barangay level. It can be called AMMA Nurturing Center (AMMA stands for Ama na Magaling Magaruga ng Anak—fathers who are great in caring for children).

Carandang, Sison and Carandang suggest that a team of psychologists and volunteers work with the government to start such pilot centers. These could then be duplicated in other barangays.

These should bring some light back to many homes.

* * *

Send feedback to cerespd@info.com.ph

Illegitimate

Kristine Jane A. Esperacion

I HAVE NEVER COMPLAINED ABOUT IT, BUT I MUST ASK why. I suppose there are many of us who were born out of wedlock. But at my age of 16, I suppose I am not too young and certainly not too old to ask why.

A year and some months before I was created, my older sister had the dreadful burden of absorbing the sins of the world. Now I suppose you'll be asking why my mom had to make the same mistake twice. I do not know much about this kind of love, and it's a pain to hear that thing about love being able to conquer all.

So what was the problem? She had everything she wanted, except the time of her parents. They were too busy preparing for their children's future. There were five children, well-fed three times a day, educated in the top schools in the city and blessed with intelligence. On the other hand, according to some people I talked with, my father was the boy next door, intelligent and handsome, but unfortunately not very well off or poor or whatever you call someone lacking in material things. Thus, my mom's parents were not very happy to see their young girl running around with a guy who seemed totally lacking of the potential to provide for their future.

But mama had the spirit of a wild mare, and she was defiant. She had been deprived of her freedom of speech, which she gracefully accepted. But this was her chance to exercise her freedom. She wasn't sure if her decision would change the situation for the better, but she bravely took the chance.

I cannot say much about my father. I cannot blame him for not being able to fight for my mom. I do not know if he even tried to be a hero and did anything in her defense. But even if he didn't, I still wish him well.

Mom had every opportunity to abort us, and free herself of disgrace and future regrets. Instead, she courageously accepted us together with the greatest responsibility of a growing woman.

There was not a night when she thought of us as mistakes. I have never heard her say it, but I can feel it all the time. For every single day with her feels like the most perfect day created by God. She has given us all the love she can give, and all the caring, and all the time that her parents could have given her, the way she wanted it to be given.

There are times, when papa creeps into our conversations. Mama has never spoken ill of him. The only time she did, or I thought she did, was when she wondered why I didn't have my father's aptitude for math.

That part always gave us something to laugh about. Anyway, she would add, I had the good luck to have the shape of her eyes, the pleasantness of her laughter and the beauty of heart.

But that part about intelligence or the lack of it hardly matters. I always try to make up for any shortcomings in that department by diligence and hard work.

I owe everything to my mom—to her utmost dedication, patience and perseverance. A sentence, a book and a lifetime of writings will never be enough to capture the sacrifices she has made to make us what we are now.

So here I am today. Although I have a very good relationship with my grandparents, who had to drive papa away, many questions remain in my head. Since my mom and my grandparents did everything they could to make my life a happy one, I know I ought not to care anymore. I may never get to know my papa, or what he looks like, or where he lives. But if by some chance we happen to meet, I would tweak his nose and tell him: "Hey, Pa, I've grown responsible while you were not around. It's such a pity you let go of a fortune, and the fortune's fortune."

Kristine Jane A. Esperacion, 16, is a senior at Dagupan City National High School.

A limited and limiting consensus

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

FOR TOO MANY OF US, THE BOTTOM LINE IS the Marcosian belief that "nothing succeeds like success." However, that doesn't mean that criticisms, particularly against the opposition leveled by people who believe success is the only thing that matters, have no basis or usefulness.

I won't speak for organizations I belong to, because they operate by means of consensus. One can vigorously debate organizational positions, but in the end one complies or leaves. So far, I've seen no reason to disengage from any of the organizations to which I belong.

That being said, I have my own views. In opposition meetings, I do speak out, and one thing I say often enough is that we shouldn't engage in fights for the sake of fighting. When the third impeachment complaint was filed, for example, I supported efforts to fortify the complaint, and rescue it from its obviously administration-serving objectives. But I also said that if there wasn't any chance of a fair hearing or for the improvements (which any fair-minded person could see were superior to the original complaint) to be entertained, then the opposition should be prepared to simply walk away.

After all, to give credit where credit is due, on the whole the opposition learned from the first two unsuccessful impeachment attempts and realized it has to do its homework well, because the public wasn't interested in half-assed complaints. The problem is that the opposition got it coming and going: when it is beaten to the gun, people complained; if it tried to jump the gun, people would have complained, too. But better to show the opposition was prepared to hold its fire in favor of a substantial complaint, than simply join in the fray willy-nilly.

Obviously the discussion in opposition circles got heated; there were some who insisted that if any avenue opened up, seize it and milk it for what it's worth. I'm happy that on the whole, the opposition decided not to fall into the trap and after submitting a superior complaint, when it saw the administration majority had other priorities in mind, it simply didn't dignify the disreputable exercise.

Which leaves a year to compile the evidence for another complaint, the problem being of course that it also means that the first two complaints' issues have gone stale and this year's pretty meaty ones, just might, too. Not least because just when things were heating up, part of the opposition in the Senate called off the hearings and so gave the administration a free pass.

It is necessary to pursue confrontation but not for the sake of confrontation, particularly in a situation where too many defeats strengthen the administration and allow it to summon support from those who believe that success is its own reward.

Then again, I also believe that you have to be in it for the long haul, and an elementary aspect of politics is going beyond preaching to the converted and gaining new converts. This means according the skeptical and the uncooperative a basic modicum of respect, including recognizing their desire for some sort of stability.

If this means essentially participating in a fight with one hand tied behind your back, because the public wills it and doesn't care if the government not only fights with both gloves on but horseshoes in its gloves, then so be it. You're after the long term and that means recognizing that eventually, all the excuses of the tacit and overt supporters of the administration will be proven false. For example, all the yammering to "give her until 2010." Well, you can't rush it until 2008, 2009 or early 2010 rolls around, and they have no choice but to see that oops, she isn't operating by that deadline, is she? This is the clear signal being sent by the revival of Charter change, after all.

At which point you have to bear in mind that people will be even more hostile because they were proven wrong, but it would be nice to be able not to wave fingers at them but to embrace them, even belatedly, as they join the fight.

And even if she steps down, at least you kept her on her toes until then, and who knows, it might just be that keeping her off balance prevented her exploring extension options. So, no regrets, either.

There is a strong point to be made that what Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV did was brought about by the inflexibility of the administration and that foolishly or not, he let the chips fall where they may, which is something other groups don't want to risk. But also, that the move unduly antagonized a public already coming to see, via ZTE, etc., that the administration has no moral standing and that "Let him who has no sin cast the first stone" is a bogus argument, which may suit the Son of God but not participants in a secular political culture. You don't have to be blameless to cast the first stone; innocence is irrelevant when pursuing such issues. Either the issue on its own has merit, regardless who is pursuing it, or the issue is irrelevant.

For now, there is a consensus that governs political action. It is a consensus that serves the administration best of all but for now, we ought to respect it is as a sign of good faith and submission to the principle of majority rule. The consensus? Keep it peaceful, keep it constitutional, but knowing that disobedience and defiance can be constitutional, too.

To respect this consensus is to pave the way for the day when the rationales run out, and then people will know you gave them the benefit of the doubt in terms of the limits they wanted to impose and they'll be prepared to give you the benefit of the doubt, too.

Again, this is my view and one not necessarily shared by other people opposed to the President and her people.

Holiday Events
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HOLIDAY ROOM PACKAGES
14 to 30 December 2007 and 1 to 6 January 2008
Luxurious accommodation choices start at P4,000++ single or twin, inclusive of American Buffet Breakfast. No charge for children below 12 years old sharing room with parents. For Philippine residents including expats with ACR. For reservations call 819 9682 to 84, or 750 8888.

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Christmas Holiday Specials at The Tivoli, Tin Hau & Paseo Uno

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MOMENTS WITH SANTA
24 December, 7 pm to 10 pm
25 December, 12 pm to 3 pm
Bring the children over to the Paseo Uno, The Tivoli, Tin Hau, Captain's Bar and Mandarin Deli to meet Santa as he makes his rounds. Have a camera ready to capture the special moment.

GOODIES & TREATS
until 31 December
Visit the Mandarin Deli and the Mandarin Oriental Café & Deli at Gateway Mall for Christmas hampers and more.

CHRISTMAS CAROLS
24 December, 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm
At the Captain's Bar, the talented Peace Children's Choir relives the story of the Nativity at a musical performance.

NEW YEAR'S COUNTDOWN
31 December, 10 pm
at the Captain's Bar
Groove to the R&B beat of the sizzling sirens of the all-girl band Mocha as we count down to an exciting 2008.

HOLY MASS
24 December, 10 pm at the Ballroom
1 January, 11 am at the Lobby Lounge

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For nation's sake, resign!

"Come let us walk in the light of the Lord!" (Isaiah 2:5)

"Let us then throw off the works of darkness and put the armor of light." (Rom. 13:11)

AS WE CELEBRATE THE SEASON OF ADVENT, we are invited to be awake and prepared. Advent means, "coming or arrival," thus we must be ready to receive the message of God's coming through the Messiah. We need advent to remind us that justice and peace will be achieved in the future amid the signs of the times.

The Order of Carmelites Justice and Peace and Integrity of Creation shares the call of prophet Isaiah and Apostle Paul "that people will come together in the Lord's name. Wars will cease and there will be peace."

We respond to this challenge as we face the darkness brought by the glaring issues of large-scale corruption, human rights crisis and economic plunder that still await truthful and just resolution.

We mourn for poor 12-year-old Mariannet Amper who ended her life by hanging because of extreme poverty. We are scandalized by the wave of corruption and bribery, including the anomalous NBN-ZTE deal and the distribution of "early Christmas gifts" to win over congressmen and governors to the side of the administration. The multimillion-peso anomalies leave our people ever more dispossessed, including the P728-million fertilizer scam, the $2-million Impsa power plant payoff, the P28-billion NorthRail project, the P200-million Jose Pidal bank account, the P1.3-billion Mega Pacific-Comelec computerization scam, and the P1.1-billion Macapagal Boulevard overpriced contract.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

While prices of basic commodities steadily increase, no substantial wage and salary hikes have been implemented and excessive taxes continue to burden the poor. While disasters and ever-deepening poverty continue to grip the nation, President Macapagal-Arroyo and more than 30 administration lawmakers, with their families tagging along, spent public funds for their trip to Europe.

We join the cries for justice for all the victims of extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances and other human rights violations, the Glorietta blast and the Batasan bombing, and the massive militarization that has displaced hundreds and hundreds of civilian communities.

Guided by our Carmelite Constitutions 111: "We live in a world full of injustice and disquiet. It is our duty to contribute to the search for an understanding of the causes of these evils."

The morally bankrupt presidency that has governed with fraud and violence is clearly the cause of evils in our nation today. We thus join the Filipino people in the pursuit of truth and justice. To save our people from the dark powers of this corrupt-ridden administration, for the good of the nation, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo must step down now!

—FR. JERRY SABADO, O.Carm., national convenor, O.Carm-JPIC, 26 Acacia St., Barangay Mariana, QC

Quezon's crab mentality shows in column

WE WRITE IN RESPONSE TO MANUEL L. Quezon III's Dec. 3 column "War freaks."

Instead of writing an intelligent analysis of the Peninsula Manila incident, Quezon descended to name-calling and mudslinging, which are the preferred tools of mediocre writers. He maligned the best legal minds in the Senate today, like Senators Miriam Defensor-Santiago, Juan Ponce Enrile and Joker Arroyo, in order to prop up the image of his favorite senator.

We wish to point out to Quezon that Senator Santiago's qualifications make her a worthy nominee to the International Court of Justice (ICJ). She holds LLM and JD degrees from the University of Michigan, is a Magsaysay Awardee for government service and has served in all three branches of government as a regional trial court judge, a Cabinet secretary and a senator. By belittling the senator's accomplishments and questioning her nomination to the ICJ, Quezon demonstrated his crab mentality.

Quezon's act of casting malicious aspersions on the lady senator from Iloilo neither advanced his arguments nor won sympathy for the senator he was so eager to defend. It only served to highlight the ridiculousness of his arguments. Perhaps he was wearing the Magdalo soldier's wig while writing his column.

—TOM TOLIBAS, Office of Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, Room 521-A, Senate of the Philippines, Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City

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ORIENTAL PENINSULA RESOURCES GROUP, INC.
Application and Settlement Procedures for Local Small Investors

1. The Local Small Investors ("LSI") program will be managed by the sole underwriter, Asian Alliance Investment Corp. to receive LSI applications from 9:00 am December 10, 2007 to 12:00 noon December 14, 2007.
2. Upon application, an LSI applicant is required to submit the following documents: Four (4) copies of the fully accomplished Oriental Peninsula Resources Group, Inc. Application to Subscribe/Purchase and one copy of a duly executed signature card which can be secured from the sole underwriter, Asian Alliance Investment Corp. 12th Floor Equitable Bank Tower, 8751 Paseo de Roxas, Makati City (Tel Nos. 8860001 to 05). Photocopy to two (2) valid and current government-issued IDs (e.g., Passport, PRC, SSS, GSIS, Driver's license.) For joint accounts / multiple investors in one application, two (2) valid IDs per account/ investor are also required. Payment maybe in the form of Cash or Metro Manila clearing check. All check payments must be made payable to "Oriental Peninsula IPO" and dated as of the date of submission of the application and crossed for deposit.
3. As required by the PSE for all subscribers to the Offer Shares, LSI applicants should lodge his/her shares with the Philippine Depository and Trust Corporation ("PDTC") and is required to nominate a PDTC participant (subject to the latter's confirmation) to whom his/her shares will be lodged. The broker is required to sign-off on the LSI's fully accomplished Oriental Peninsula Resources Group, Inc. Application to Subscribe/Purchase.
4. Multiple bookings (two or more applications by the same applicant) will not be allowed. Each LSI applicant may subscribe to not more than PhP 25,000 worth of Offer Shares.
5. The duly received and accepted application of the LSI applicant will be made available for distribution at the office where the applicant submitted his/ her application three (3) trading days after listing date.

Prior to the release of the duly received and accepted application, an LSI applicant is required to present any valid ID for proper identification while the representative of the LSI applicant is required to present an authorization letter and proper identification documents.

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Offer of 300,000,000 new Common Shares
With par Value Of P1.00 per Offer Share

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YELLOW - Underwriter/PSE trading Participant
BLUE - Acknowledgement copy

This Application Form (the "Application"), to be completed in four (4) copies, together with a duly executed signature card, the appropriate check payment, and all required attachments must be received by the Underwriter not later than 11:00 a.m., Manila Time, on December 14, 2007.

Applications received thereafter or without the attachments specified below will be rejected. This Application is irrevocable and once received may not be withdrawn by the Applicant. ORIENTAL PENINSULA RESOURCES GROUP, INC. (the "Company"), by itself or through Asian Alliance Investment Corp. (the "Underwriter"), reserves the right to accept or reject this Application. Applications improperly or incompletely accomplished may be rejected. In case of over subscription, the Company, by itself or through the Underwriter, reserves the right to allocate the Offer Shares available to Applicants in the manner it deems appropriate.

An Application, once accepted and approved by the Company, through the Underwriter, shall constitute a purchase agreement between the Company and the Applicant for the purchase of the Offer Shares in the number approved by the Company at the time, in the manner, and subject to (a) the conditions set forth herein, (b) the Company's receipt of the appropriate funds from the Applicant, (c) the successful listing of the Shares on the Philippine Stock Exchange ("PSE"), and (d) upon the underwriting and purchase obligations of the Underwriter becoming unconditional and not being suspended, terminated or cancelled, on or before such listing.

Capitalized terms used herein shall have the meaning ascribed to them in the final Prospectus filed by the Company with the PSE on December 10, 2007 and uploaded on the PSE website, as amended or supplemented, as follows:

APPLICATION

I / We apply to subscribe/purchase ORIENTAL PENINSULA RESOURCES GROUP, INC. Offer Shares under the terms and conditions stated herein and in the Offer Prospectus, as follows:

NUMBER OF OFFER SHARES	OFFER PRICE PER OFFER SHARE (IN PESOS)	TOTAL OFFER PRICE (IN PESOS)
	P 2.68	P

Applications must be for a minimum of 5,000 Offer Shares, and thereafter, in multiples of 1,000 Offer Shares.

PDTC LODGEMENT

All Offer Shares shall be lodged with the Philippine Depository and Trust Corp. ("PDTC"). The Applicant must provide the information required for PDTC lodged shares. The Offer Shares will be lodged by the Company with the PDTC on the Listing Date.

THE APPLICANT IS REQUIRED TO FILL OUT THE INFORMATION BELOW. THE APPLICANT'S FAILURE TO DO SO OR THE PROVISION OF INCOMPLETE OR FALSE INFORMATION AS REQUIRED HEREIN, MAY LEAD TO THE REJECTION OF THIS APPLICATION. THE COMPANY RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT OR SCALE DOWN SUCH APPLICATION.

Additional information required for PDTC-lodged Offer Shares (to be completed with the assistance of the PDTC Participant appointed by the Applicant)	We confirm that we are a PDTC Participant and that the Applicant named in this Application is our bonafide client.
PDTC Participant Firm, PDTC Participant Code, PDTC Sub-Account Code	Authorized Signature(s) and Stamp of PDTC Participant

PAYMENT

The Offer Shares must be paid for through a personal or corporate check, manager's check or a cashier's check drawn against a bank account with a Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas-authorized agent bank or any branch thereof, located in Metro Manila. Checks should be dated as of the date of submission of the Application, made payable to "Oriental Peninsula IPO", and crossed "Payee's Account Only".

TYPE OF CHECK	DRAWEE BANK /BRANCH	CHECK NO.	AMOUNT
☐ Personal ☐ Corporate ☐ Manager's Cashiers			

REPRESENTATIONS, WARRANTIES AND AUTHORIZATION

I/We represent and warrant that all information contained herein and the attached documents are true and correct, and understand that the Company and the Underwriter may rely upon the representations and warranties I/we have made in this Application. I/We warrant having read and understood and relied solely upon the Prospectus in deciding to submit this Application and in acquiring and investing in the Offer Shares applied for. I/We warrant have read and understood, and unconditionally accept, the terms and conditions set forth in this Application. I/We understand that no person has been authorized to give information or to make any representation with respect to the Offer Shares other than those specified in the Prospectus. I/We hereby instruct and authorize the Company and/or the Underwriter to execute any application form or other documents and generally to do all such other things as the Company or the Underwriter may consider necessary or desirable to effect the registration in my/our name of the Offer Shares applied for, or any lesser number in respect of which an Application may be accepted, in the Stock and Transfer Book of the Company. I/We undertake to sign all documents and to do all other acts necessary to enable me/us to be registered as the owner of the Offer Shares applied for, or any lesser number in respect of which the Application may be accepted, subject to the Articles of Incorporation and By-laws of the Company and the laws of the Republic of the Philippines.

NAME OF APPLICANT (IN PRINT)	SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT/DRAWEE BANK /BRANCH	DATE

ADDRESS	NATIONALITY	TELEPHONE NUMBER/S	TAX IDENTIFICATION NUMBER

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

(Applicants should not fill in this section)

To be completed by the Trading Participant/Underwriter	To be completed by the Underwriter
Application received By: _____ Date/Time: _____ Name of Trading Participant/Underwriter & Authorized Signatory	Application accepted and approved by Total Number of Offer Shares Accepted: _____ By: _____ Date/Time: _____

REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS TO THIS APPLICATION

For Individual Applicants (pls. note that individual applicants are required to personally submit their applications):
Photocopy of any two (2) valid and current government issued identification (passport, driver's license, SSS, GSIS or PRC) with Applicant's picture and signature

For Corporate Applicants:
☐ A duly executed signature card in the form attached to this Application;
☐ A certified true copy of the latest Articles of Incorporation and By-laws of the Applicant, duly certified by its Corporate Secretary;
☐ A certified true copy of the SEC Certificate of Registration of the Applicant, duly certified by its Corporate Secretary; and
☐ A duly notarized certificate of the Applicant's Corporate Secretary that sets out (a) the resolutions of the Applicant's Board of Directors or equivalent body authorizing the purchase of the Offer Shares subject of the Application and designating signatories for the purpose, (b) the specimen signatures of such designated signatories, and (c) percentage holdings by Philippine nationals in the Applicant.
☐ For foreign corporate and institutional Applicants, in addition to the foregoing documents, a certification, in quadruplicate, representing and warranting that their investing in the Offer Shares subject of the Application will not violate the laws of their jurisdiction and that they are allowed to acquire, purchase and hold the Offer Shares.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE SALE/PURCHASE OF OFFER SHARES IN ORIENTAL PENINSULA RESOURCES GROUP, INC.

The information supplied below are merely excerpts taken from the final Prospectus filed by the Company with the PSE on December 10, 2007 and uploaded on the PSE website, as amended or supplemented. For a complete description of the Terms of the Offer, the Applicant is advised to refer to the section entitled "Terms and Conditions of the Offer" in the Prospectus.

1. The Offer – The Company, through the Underwriter, is offering 300,000,000 new Common Shares with a par value of P1.00 per Offer Share.
2. Eligible Investor – The Offer Shares of the Company offered in the Offer may be purchased by any natural person of legal age residing in the Philippines regardless of nationality, or by any corporation, association, partnership, trust account, fund or entity residing in and organized under the laws of the Philippines and/or licensed to do business in the Philippines, regardless of nationality, subject to the right of the Company to reject an Application or to reduce the number of Offer Shares applied for subscription or purchase if accepting the Application will cause the Company to breach foreign ownership restrictions for certain nationalized activities it engages in, under relevant Philippine laws. These activities and restrictions are discussed in the Prospectus.
3. Offer Price – The Offer Price is P2.68 per Offer Share.
4. Minimum Subscription - Applications to subscribe to the Offer Shares must be for a minimum of 5,000 Offer Shares, and thereafter in multiples of 1,000 Offer Shares.
5. Offer Period – The Offer Period commences at 9:00 a.m., Manila Time, on December 10, 2007 and closes at 12:00 noon, Manila time, on December 14, 2007. The Company and the Underwriter reserve the right to extend or terminate the Offer Period with the prior approval of the PSE.
6. Application and Acceptance – Applications and signature cards may be obtained from the Underwriter or the Selling Agents/Trading Participants. A duly and fully accomplished Application in four (4) copies together with a duly executed signature card, the appropriate check payment, and required documents must be received by the Underwriter or Selling Agents on or before close of the Offer Period.

The Company, by itself or through the Underwriter, reserves the right to reject any Application or scale down or re-allocate any of the Offer Shares applied for. An Application, once expressly accepted by the Company, through the Underwriter, shall constitute a purchase agreement between the Company and the Applicant for the subscription to purchase of the Offer Shares in the number approved by the Company at the time, in the manner, and subject to (a) the conditions set forth herein, (b) the Company's receipt of the appropriate funds from the Applicant, and (c) the successful listing of the Shares on the PSE.

7. Payment – The Offer Shares must be paid for in full upon submission of the Application. Payment must be made by a check drawn against a bank in Metro Manila to the order of "Oriental Peninsula IPO". The check must be dated as of the date of submission of the Application and crossed "Payee's Account Only".
8. Issuance and Transfer Taxes – All standard taxes applicable to the issuance of the Offer Shares by the Company pursuant to the Offer shall be for the sole account of the Company.
9. Refunds – In the event that the number of Offer Shares to be received by an Applicant, as confirmed by the Underwriter, is less than the number covered by this Application, or if this Application is rejected by the Company, then the Underwriter shall refund, without interest, within five (5) Banking Days from the end of the Offer Period, all, or a portion of the payment corresponding to the number of Offer Shares wholly or partially rejected. All refunds shall be made through the Underwriter or Selling Agents with whom the Applicants have filed the Application, at the Applicants' risk.
10. PDTC Lodgement – All the Offer Shares will be lodged with the Philippine Depository and Trust Corp. ("PDTC") and the Applicant is required to provide all the information necessary for PDTC-lodged Offer Shares. The Offer Shares will be lodged by the Company with the PDTC during the Listing Date.
11. Issuance and Delivery of Stock Certificates – The Applicant may request his/her ownership of the Offer Shares to be evidenced by stock certificates issued in his/her name as evidence of ownership through his/her broker only after the Offer Shares have been listed. The cost of issuance of stock certificates shall be for the account of the Applicant.
12. Registration of Foreign Investments – The BSP requires that investments in shares of stock funded by inward remittance of foreign currency be registered with the BSP if the foreign exchange needed to service capital repatriation or dividend remittance will be sourced from the domestic banking system. The registration with the BSP of all foreign investments in the Offer Shares shall be the responsibility of the foreign investor.
13. Representation and Warranty of Foreign Investors – Applicants who are not Philippine citizens or which are corporations, associations or partnerships that are not Philippine nationals hereby represent and warrant to the Company and to the Underwriter that their application to purchase, and investment in the, Offer Shares will not violate the rules of their respective jurisdictions, and that acquiring and investing in the Offer Shares are permitted in such jurisdictions.
14. Local Small Investors – The Company plans to make available up to 20% of the Offer Shares for distribution to the Trading Participants of the PSE and up to 10% of the Offer Shares for distribution to the Local Small Investors. The term "Local Small Investors" is defined as a share subscriber or purchaser who is willing to subscribe or purchase a minimum board lot or whose subscription or purchase does not exceed P25,000.00. Should the total demand for the Offer Shares in the Local Small Investors' subscription exceed the maximum allocation, the Underwriter shall allocate the Offer Shares by balloting. Should the total demand from Local Small Investors be less than the 10% allotted to them, the unsold allocation shall be reallocated back for distribution to the general public.
15. Listing and Trading Date – Listing and trading of the Offer Shares on the PSE is expected to commence of December 19, 2007.

Account No. _____
Individual ☐
Corporate
Date: _____

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Address
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In Pampanga, 'jueteng' is STL, says new group

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—THE government-run small town lottery (STL) is largely known to many bettors in Pampanga as "jueteng," the chair of the Pampanga Anti-Gambling Council said.

"To common folks, they don't call STL as 'STL.' They call STL jueteng," Fr. Marius Roque, PAGC chair, said at the launch of the council here on Tuesday.

"It is still the same. It's jueteng. Collectors go to houses and legalizing jueteng does not make it moral," he said.

In a manifesto, the PAGC said "jueteng and STL have threatened the moral values of our families... The betting transaction is most unjust because as people give their money to the bet collectors, there is no equal exchange of goods or services."

Questions

"Moreover, we should ask the following questions: In the absence of accountability, where does the hard-earned money of the people go after it has been placed into the hands of those who gather bets? Where is the money of the community siphoned and channeled to?" he said.

Roque said the PAGC wants to stop both illegal and legal gambling and will work for the cancellation of STL next year.

"Illegal and legalized gambling... make powerful and influential the gambling operators and some politicians who benefit from them," said the manifesto signed by civil society leaders who also joined the launch of the Kapampangan Coalition Inc., by far the broadest civil society group in the province.

As it rallied bettors to stop trying their luck on jueteng, STL and other forms of gambling, PAGC asked government officials and local executives to "resist the temptation of accepting jueteng money."

It called on military and police officials to "enforce the law and dismantle illegal gambling operations."

Values

It asked priests, nuns and pastors to "promote virtues and moral values" and urged civic leaders to be part of the crusade.

"We call on gambling operators and those who support them to stop taking away the hard-earned money of our people and to stop distorting the moral values of the Kapampangan and even people of other provinces where this form of gambling is now present. We pray that your life be liberated from gambling," the PAGC said.

Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon

SMALL FRY. Alleged "jueteng" collectors fall in San Fernando City, La Union. EUSEBIO G. AGUINALDO/CONTRIBUTOR

TONETTE OREJAS/INQUIRER CENTRAL LUZON

CAPT. COLIN P. Kelly Jr., the first American hero in World War II, is officially honored by the Philippine government through a peace memorial shrine at the Clark Freeport.

1st US WWII hero honored in Clark

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CLARK FREEPORT—A SHRINE HONORING America's first hero in World War II was inaugurated here on Monday, the first to be built in his name in the Philippines in post-US bases years.

The opening of the Capt. Colin P. Kelly Jr. Peace Memorial Shrine followed that of the naming after him of a US Navy vessel and a post office in Colin's hometown in Madison, Florida, according to Lt. Col. Clay Crawford, chief of the US Air Force program of the Joint US Military Assistance program during the rites.

Speaking on behalf of US Ambassador Kristie Kenney, Crawford said the heroism of Kelly, then 26 and a B17 bomber pilot, inspired the American nation after the Dec. 8, 1941 bombing by the Japanese of Pearl Harbor in Hawaii.

Clark, a former US Air Force Base until 1991 and now an economic zone of the Philippine government, was an "extremely fitting" venue of the shrine, Crawford said.

It has become the site of Balikatan military exercises between Filipino and American troops since 1999, he said. The joint war games resumed under the Visiting Forces Agreement.

The shrine, a 50-square meter raised flower garden with Kelly's statue on a stone pedestal, is "absolutely beautiful," said Crawford. It is located beside the torn-down Kelly Theater.

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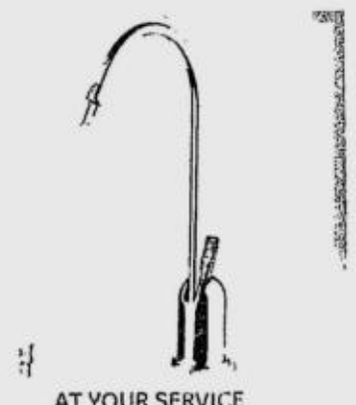

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DPWH execs sued for scam in camera project

WHAT WENT BEFORE

IN MARCH 2007, Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez ordered the Ombudsman Visayas to investigate the allegedly overpriced surveillance cameras installed in the cities of Cebu, Lapu-Lapu, and Mandaue in preparation for the 12th Asean Summit held in Cebu in January this year.

The government, through the Department of Public Works and Highways, bought 42 surveillance cameras that were installed in the Asean ceremonial routes or the streets traversed by the heads of state and delegates.

With a P90 million price tag, the cameras were reported to have cost the government about P2 million each.

It was local businessman Crisologo Saavedra's claims that prompted the investigation. Saavedra's firm, Pelican/Cebesos Development Corp., lost to Manila-based Triton Communications in a bidding for the surveillance camera project.

Philippine National Police officials have told investigators from the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission that the PNP had not yet signed papers signifying that they were accepting the Triton cameras because those that have been delivered "did not match specifications." Some units were reported to have been nonfunctional.

Inquirer Research

By Jolene R. Bulambot
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—A FORMER REgional director of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and nine other government officials were charged with grave misconduct and graft for the purchase of P83 million worth of closed circuit TV (CCTV) cameras for the 12th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) Summit held last January.

Director Virginia Palanca-Santiago, of the Visayas Ombudsman, said the DPWH officials did not comply with bidding procedures under Republic Act No. 9184, or the Government Procurement Act, when the department implemented the traffic surveillance equipment project.

"We already upgraded the inquiry into criminal and administrative cases. We found that the process of bidding was not followed. We based our findings on the Commission on Audit report," Santiago said.

Former DPWH regional director Robert Lala, DPWH assistant regional director Marlinda Alvizo, Agustinito Hermoso, Luis Galang, Restituto Diano and other members of the bids and awards committee and technical working group, headed by lawyer Ayaon Manggis, were also charged.

The 12-page final evaluation report of associate graft investigator Roderick Blazo said there was no justification for the DPWH officials to forego of bidding in the CCTV project.

Blazo, in his report, said the DPWH should have scheduled the bidding earlier and shortened the process to allow suppliers to meet their targets.

At least 41 units of cameras were installed on Dec. 9, 2006 along the Asean summit ceremonial route to enable the police to monitor the convoy of Asean leaders.

The case against the DPWH officials stemmed from the plunder complaint filed by Crisologo Saavedra, project manager of Pelican Bay Group Inc. and Cebesos Development Corp., on the alleged irregular termination of the contract between Cebesos and the DPWH for the supply, delivery and installation of traffic surveillance equipment.

Saavedra accused DPWH officials of favoring Triton Communications Corp. when it terminated the P79.8 million-contract with Cebesos, which won the bidding on Oct. 30, 2006.

The DPWH issued a contract in the form of purchase order on Nov. 6 last year to Cebesos. But Lala, on Nov. 29, terminated the contract with Cebesos for its failure to supply the materials and equipment on Nov. 20.

The following day, DPWH awarded Triton Communications Corp. the project worth P83 million and, on Dec. 9, Chief Insp. Jerry Leopoldo certified that the installation of the cameras was completed even without the authority of Chief Supt. Silverio Alarcio, police regional office chief.

The Ombudsman said there was prima facie evidence that the DPWH caused injury to Saavedra when the contract was terminated in favor of Triton Communications.

Blazo, in an interview, said Leopoldo was not included in the charges because Alarcio filed a separate administrative and criminal charge against Leopoldo at the military Ombudsman.

BEST EVENT ARNOLD ALMACEN/INQUIRER VISAYAS

The Dinagyang Festival in Iloilo City was recently awarded by the National Convention of the Association of Tourism Operators (Atop) the Best Tourism Event in the country, its second in as many years.

Palawan awaits P3-B windfall from gas

PUERTO PRINCESA—The provincial government is expecting the release of at least P3 billion as its royalty shares from the Malampaya natural gas project in northern Palawan as part of an agreement it forged with the national government.

The amount is less than the P12 billion earlier reported as the accumulated share of the province from the natural gas royalty currently being contested by both parties at the Supreme Court.

Royalties from the Camago-Malampaya gas reserves off El Nido town have accumulated since 2002, with neither the national government nor the provincial government being able to utilize the funds because of the legal dispute on sharing.

Describing the provisional interim agreement as a "breakthrough" in the dispute, Vice Gov. David Ponce de Leon told the provincial board on Tuesday that the unfreezing of the funds would help major provincial projects.

"The joint utilization of this money will ensure the speedy implementation of projects identified in the annual investment plan of the province," De Leon said.

He explained, however, that the actual amount to be released to Palawan "is subject to the availability of cash" as stated in the agreement.

Although Palawan's total share from the Malampaya project is around P12 billion, he said "the national government is not in a position to release that amount." *Redempto Anda, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

NEWSBRIEFS

Cop chief vows gambling end

OROQUIETA CITY—The provincial police chief of Misamis Occidental vowed to quit his post if he failed to stop the operation of an illegal numbers game based on the results of the daily Suertres draws of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO).

Provincial police director Supt. Erwin Villacorte said he will stop the game in two weeks.

He said the police campaign against all forms of illegal gambling in the province was successful.

He said illegal gambling had been "minimized" in the cities of Oroquieta and Ozamiz, and in the towns of Bonifacio, Calamba, Clarin, Jimenez, Plaridel, Sapang Dalaga and Tudela.

Gov. Loreto Leo Ocampos, however, said he was not satisfied with the police drive because only the "small fishes" were caught while the perceived "big ones" are untouched.

Ryan D. Rosauro, Inquirer Mindanao

Plant tree, wed later

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—A city councilor here has proposed an ordinance that will require marrying couples to plant trees before they are given marriage licenses.

Councilor Dante Vicente, a former journalist, said requiring marrying couples to plant trees would help in efforts to protect the environment.

Vicente said once his proposal becomes an ordinance, it would also instill awareness on environmental protection among couples and their future children.

Aquiles Zonio, Inquirer Mindanao

Floods hit Davao villages

DIGOS CITY—Floods, triggered by two days of incessant rains starting Monday, inundated several villages of Malita and Sulop towns in Davao del Sur but no casualty had been reported so far.

In Sulop, the floods damaged books, school documents and computers at the Sulop National High School.

Classes were also suspended because of the floods, according to officials.

In Malita town, at least 150 families were displaced when floodwaters rose to more than one meter in Barangay Poblacion.

Malita Mayor Benjamin Bautista said those displaced by the floods were residents living near fishponds.

Orlando Dinoy, Inquirer Mindanao

2 shot dead in Davao

TAGUM CITY—Suspected communist rebels shot dead a man and his son, who were allegedly acting as military informers in nearby Panabo City in Davao del Norte early Wednesday, police said.

Chief Insp. Raymundo Lozano, Panabo City police chief, identified the victims as Alberto Munsay, a former rebel turned heavy equipment operator, and his son Alvin, 22, a laborer.

Lozano said the victims were riding a motorcycle on their way to work in a drainage repair project of the city government when attacked in Barangay Sto. Niño at around 7:15 a.m.

The assailants, who were also on a motorcycle, immediately fled after the attack, he said.

Frinston Lim, Inquirer Mindanao

NPA rebel killed in clashes

CAMP NAKAR, Lucena City—A rebel was killed Dec. 10 in an encounter between communist guerrillas and government forces in northern Quezon, according to a military report.

The report also said three Army soldiers were wounded in two separate encounters with NPA rebels.

Maj. Randolph Cabangbang, from the Armed Forces Southern Luzon Command, said the unidentified body was left behind by his comrades in Sitio Makidata, Barangay Pagsangahan, General Nakar town.

He said one soldier was also wounded in the encounter.

Two Army soldiers were also injured in a separate gun battle in Barangay Galalan, Pangil, Laguna last Friday.

Cabangbang identified the wounded soldiers as Pfc Ernesto Dacanay, who suffered a bullet wound in the right leg, and Pfc Rodolfo Bautista who was hit in the right arm.

Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

Holiday today in Gen. Trias

GENERAL TRIAS, Cavite celebrates its 259th founding anniversary with a special nonworking holiday today, Dec. 13.

The day will start with Mass at 7 a.m. to be followed by a motorcade and a sports festival for all municipal employees, according to a news release.

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Ancient burial urn retells Bicol epic

By Juan Escandor Jr.
Naga City

A PRE-HISPANIC BURIAL urn at the Museo de Concilliar de Naga in Naga City speaks of Bicol's Ibalon epic starring King Handiong, according to a study of a Filipino anthropologist.

Dr. Zeus Salazar believes that the urn's cover design also reflects the period when the inhabitants of the archipelago were starting to relate with their Indo-Malaysian neighbors.

A summa cum laude graduate of history from the University of the Philippines with a doctorate in ethnology from the University of Paris, Salazar interpreted the design figures to be characters and creatures of the Ibalon epic.

His study was published as a book titled "Liktao at Epiko, Ang Takip ng Tapayang Libingan ng Libmanan, Camarines Sur."

The urn cover, with a 32-centimeter circumference, details enigmatic forms and figures around a pyramid-like center that convey lines from the ancient epic.

No living tradition

Salazar does not consider Handiong's story a real ethno-epic, or a living tradition intertwined with people's beliefs and religious practices, like the Darangen of the Maranaw, Ulahingan of the Manobo, and Olaging from Bukidnon.

It narrates the mystical origins of the first man and woman of Aslon and Ibalon (now the provinces of Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Albay, Sorsogon, Catanduanes and Masbate), and the exploits of the warrior-leader Handiong, one of the heroes of Ibalon.

Handiong, as the epic goes, fought a giant cyclops for 10 months, defeated the winged Tiburon and the fierce Sarimao, and won over the seductive serpent Oriol before starting a village.

The place prospered. Soon, the inhabitants invented farm implements.

King

According to curator Fabie Arejola, some historical buffs have speculated that the burial urn, unearthed in 1982 in Bigaho, Libmanan, might have contained the remains of Handiong himself.

In the epic, Handiong was the king of Libmanan who sent 1,000 warriors led by Bantong to kill the half-man, half-beast giant monster Rabot. Bantong slew Rabot while sleeping in a cave dwelling.

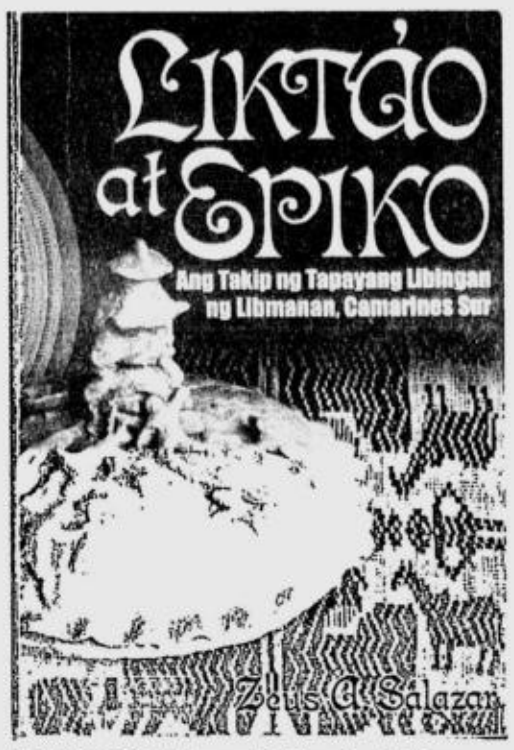
Handiong and his warriors came to Ibalon (Spanish colonizers once called Bicol the Tierra de Ybalon) to "clear" the place and start planting, but the king was challenged by a serpent called Uryol or Oriol who later became a close ally in building the region's civilization.

Arejola said the urn had yet to be carbondated to determine its age, but she said several experts had already examined and concluded its authenticity and prehistory, while others were skeptical.

Salazar traced the publisher of the "fragmented" five-part Ibalon epic to Spanish friar Jose Castaño in the 1800s.

He ascertained that another friar, Bernardino Melendreras, wrote it in Spanish, using a European literary form in one part. But he finds the remaining parts "more authentic."

The anthropologist compared and correlated the designs and contents of the burial urn with those of similar artifacts found elsewhere in the Philippines to arrive at the period of 5000 BC to 10 AD when the burial urn cover was crafted.



THE BOOK "Liktao at Epiko: Ang Takip ng Tapayang Libingan ng Libmanan, Camarines Sur" by ethnologist Zeus Salazar analyses the burial urn cover design as reflective of Bicol's folk epic, the Ibalon. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Salazar traced its source from the villages of Poro or Bigaho in Libmanan, where the driver of artifact collector Dr. Ermelo Almeda said they frequented to buy artifacts in the 1980s. Almeda died in 1998 and left no catalogue of his large collection, ranging from fossilized dinosaur eggs and Stone Age instruments to Chinese porcelain wares.

Poro and Bigaho were mentioned by German-Russian ethnologist Fedor Jagor in 1851 archeological finds, such as human remains, deer horns, plates and pots, during a road construction, Salazar said.

Doubts

National Museum officials consulted on the burial urn cover, however, doubted the authenticity of the piece. It was bought from an artifacts digger and not discovered through scientific methods of archeology, they said.

Dr. Jesus J. Peralta, a retired anthropologist and archeologist of the National Museum, wrote that "the burial urn with minaret-like cover with incised designs was bought from a vendor, so that it cannot be ascertained where it came from, which was more likely from Mindanao."

But Salazar said the absence of a scientific archeological process could be satisfied with "topologically comparing and correlating a piece with pieces discovered in situ." He cited the museum's burial urn with a conical cover which was excavated in Calatagan, Batangas, as one example of one authentic piece not obtained in situ.

The National Museum even declared the Calatagan urn a national treasure and the "first artifact ... to contain evidence of ancient Philippine writing," he said.

Finding meaning

Trying to interpret the figures and the tableau on the cover of the Libmanan urn, Salazar followed the three triangular divisions joined by a central pyramid-like figure. Each division contains figures that he believed were characters of the Ibalon epic or depictions of people's life in pre-Hispanic Bicol.

Salazar named the groupings "Ang Tatsulok ng Bungo (Triangle of the Skull)," "Ang Tatsulok ng Araw (Triangle of the Sun)," and "Ang Tatsulok ng Bibig (Triangle of the Mouth)," based on the differentiating figure in each of the three sides of the tower-like structure. He considered them episodes of the epic.

"Ang Tatsulok ng Bungo" has a miniature head-like figure that Salazar sees as a skull. He explained that it lacked features to represent a human head, like hair, discernible face, teeth, ears, while its discernible eyes were mere points.

A container before the skull with two elongated figures tries to depict a ritual offering to the ancestors practiced by pre-Hispanic Filipinos, he said.

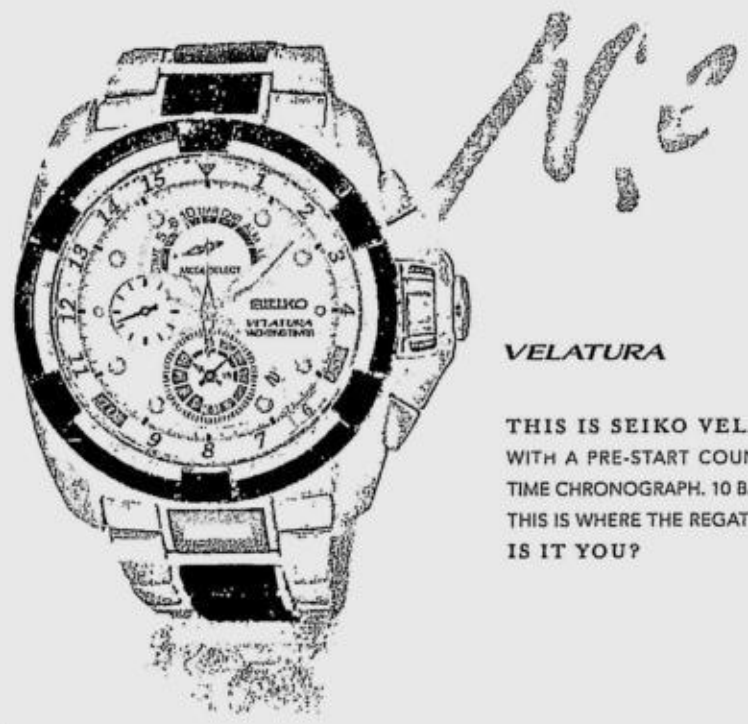
Representations

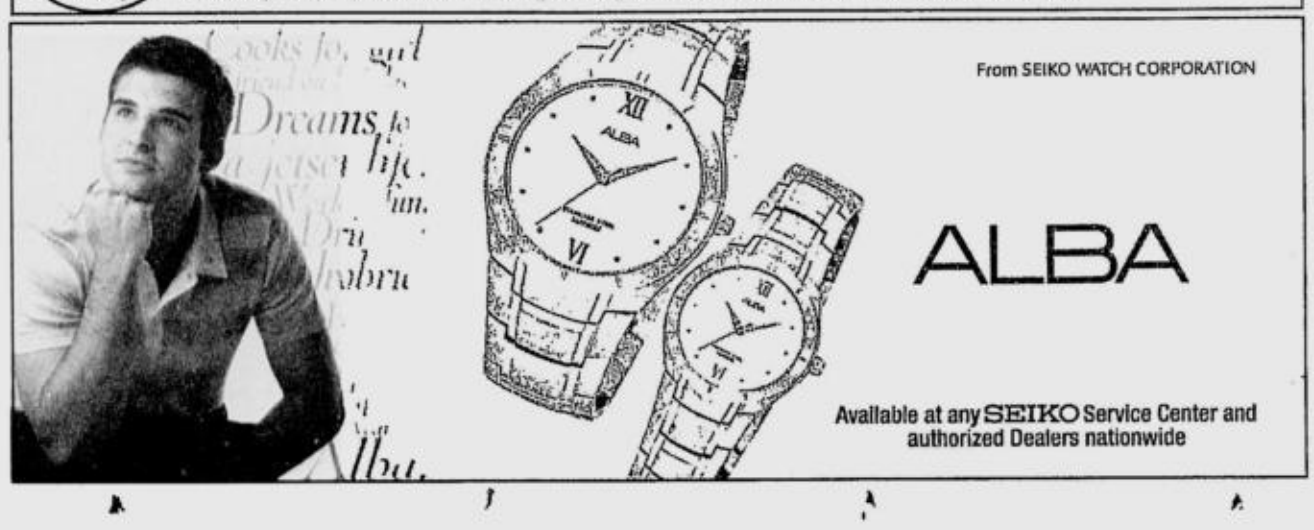
"Ang Tatsulok ng Araw" has carabao and sun representations, with at least 21 discernible rays drawn on one side of the central tower-like figure and four "points" on the surface on the right side of the animal.

Salazar inventoried the figures as indicating what were lost. He explained that the scene reflected the prehistoric time because, he said, the carabao had no nose ring and did not pull a plow. The Spanish colonizers introduced the plow, he said.

He considers the "Ang Tatsulok ng Bibig" the most complete composition. He identified as a crawling human figure holding in the right hand a crocodile; another human figure that seemed to be kneeling, head toward the mouth-like opening; two deer-like figures and another animal-like figure.

Salazar interpreted those to refer to an episode in the epic in which Handiong consulted the serpent. The mouth-like opening, he said, was actually a cave entrance, the protruded "tongue" as a serpent, and the kneeling figure as Handiong.





Philippine Electricity Market Corporation

ANNOUNCEMENT

In view of numerous requests from the members, the Office of the Corporate Secretary of the Philippine Electricity Market Corporation (PEMC) will continue to receive nominations for candidates for Independent Directors up to 5:00 p.m., 14 December 2007. The acceptance of nominations received after the original deadline of December 7, 2007 will, however, be subject to the approval of the Secretary of Energy and PEMC Board Chairman Angelo T. Reyes of the change in schedules/timeline.

Inquiries may be directed to -

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Philippine Electricity Market Corporation (PEMC)
18th Floor, Robinsons Equitable Tower
ADB Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City
Telephone 635-0047
Telefax 631-8734 loc. 264
E-mail crencarnacion@wesm.ph

12 December 2007, Pasig City

'Hungry' Tigers snack on Magnolia

GAMES TODAY (*Cuneta Astrodome*)
4:50 p.m.—Welcoat vs Talk N Text
7:20 p.m.—Red Bull vs Sta. Lucia Realty

By June Navarro

THESE PACK OF TIGERS ARE REALLY, really hungry.

Coca-Cola crawled from 15 points down in the fourth quarter and went on to devour Magnolia, 114-108, for their third straight win in the Smart-PBA Philippine Cup last night at the Araneta Coliseum.

Rookie Ronjay Buenafe set another career-high by pumping in 12 of his 23 points down the stretch and Asi Taulava had another monster game of 25 points and 13 rebounds for the Tigers' fourth victory in 12 games.

"I promised to do everything remotely possible just to win this game," said Taulava. Since his arrival via a trade, the 6-foot-9 former MVP has led his team to three wins in four games.

Buenafe drained three crucial three-pointers while Taulava relentlessly hammered the paint as the Tigers unloaded 22 quick points that erased a 99-84 deficit in just four minutes.

"We didn't panic," said Taulava. "They (Beverage Masters) took us for granted."

Mark Telan posted another double-double of 13 points and 16 rebounds—his ninth straight this conference—while Alex Cabagnot, who finished with 17 points, sealed Magnolia's second consecutive defeat and sixth in 13 outings with four game-clinching freethrows in the end.

In the other match, Willie Miller tallied 21 points and issued 10 assists while Sonny Thoss added 18 points as Alaska dumped Air21, 100-89, to move to solo third behind idle Purefoods (10-3) and Red Bull (8-4). It was the eighth victory of the Aces in 13 games. The Express lost for the second time in a row and fell to 5-7.

Meanwhile, former RP men's basketball coach Chot Reyes has pulled out of the commissionership race, officer-in-charge Sonny Barrios said yesterday.

The scores:

First Game

COCA-COLA 114—Taulava 25, Buenafe 23, Cabagnot 17, Telan 13, Isip 11, Dimaunahan 7, Enrile 5, Duremdes 5, Tolomia 4, Arigo 4, Misolas 0.

MAGNOLIA 108—Tenorio 23, Ildefonso 22, Tugade 16, Gonzales 11, Seigle 10, Eman 9, Villanueva 9, Hontiveros 7, Fonacier 1, Racela 0.

Quarters: 28-34, 51-52, 82-90, 114-108

Second Game

ALASKA 100—Miller 21, Thoss 18, Cortez 15, Hugnatan 13, Ferriols 12, Quinahan 7, Dela Cruz 6, Cabatu 4, Carlaso 4, Bono 0, Laure 0, Aban 0.

AIR21 89—Santos 15, De Ocampo 14, Cruz 13, Canaleta 13, Chia 11, Kramer 10, Intal 9, Se 3, Sotto 1, Baluyot 0.

Quarters: 17-26, 48-38, 77-66, 100-89

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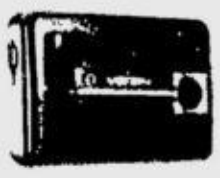

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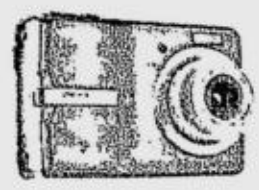

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DID YOU KNOW

ON NOV. 15, 1935, Manuel L. Quezon and Sergio Osmeña took their oath as president and vice president of the newly inaugurated Philippine Commonwealth. The oath-taking was held in front of the legislative building in Manila. On the same day, Gen. Douglas MacArthur arrived to serve as military adviser to Quezon.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

Oil spill source in Munti traced

By TJ Burgonio

THE OIL SPILL REPORTED IN Muntinlupa City has been contained, but the Laguna Lake Development Authority wants an explanation from the erring companies.

"It has been contained at the mouth of the river," said LLDA General Manager Edgardo Manda, who inspected the area Monday.

Personnel from the Coast Guard and the city government used boom spills, a foam-like device that absorbs oil, to contain the spill in a creek at the Villa Carolina I Subdivision in Barangay Tunasan, he added.

The team collected at least 20 drums of bunker oil and waste water from the creek which flows into the Tunasan-Cuyab River, a tributary of the Laguna de Bay.

The LLDA later traced the spill to leaks in the factories of Alaska Milk and Universal Robina Corp. which operate inside a compound in Barangay Tunasan, according to Manda.

"We're preparing a directive ordering them to explain their failure to mitigate the oil spill. We're also holding a hearing on the spill on Friday," he said.

Depending on their findings, the LLDA may issue a cease and desist order against the two companies, he added.

The spill was the second one reported in the city in three weeks.

Last Nov. 22, used oil from a coffee plant in San Pedro, Laguna was reportedly dumped in the Tunasan-Cuyab River which spread to the Tunasan shoreline of the Laguna Lake and caused a fish kill.

Fire leaves 100 families homeless

ONE HUNDRED FAMILIES WERE LEFT homeless when a fire hit a densely populated area in Tondo, Manila at 2 a.m. yesterday.

Arson investigators said they were still trying to determine the cause of the fire that broke out on Road 10, Zaragosa Street. They suspected, however, that the blaze was probably caused by an unattended candle because the house where the fire started had no electricity.

Damage to property was estimated at around P200,000. *Tina G. Santos*

Robbers break into glassworks shop in Quezon City

By Jeannette I. Andrade

SIX ARMED ROBBERS BROKE into an aluminum and glassworks shop in Quezon City before dawn yesterday.

They mauled Elgin Aguila, 20, and then tied up his father Ernesto, owner of Aguila Glazer's Glass and Aluminum Corp., and other members of the household.

Elgin, who had a deep gash on the forehead and a broken nose, was later taken to The Medical City in Pasig City.

A report from the Quezon City Police District Anonas Station 9 said that the six men, who were armed with knives and a gun, broke into the Aguilas' house on Kamias Road in Barangay Sikatuna sometime between 5:30 a.m. and 6 a.m. yesterday.

The glass and aluminum shop is on the ground floor of the three-story building.

The Aguilas live in the upper floors.

Police said Elgin tried to fight off the robbers who began hitting him before he was bound along with his father and other family members.

The men then ransacked the house, taking two cellular phones, the elder Aguila's wallet which contained P3,000 and other items.

The six suspects went their separate ways after the robbery.

The Aguilas were later untied by their housemaid who was apparently unaware that they had just been robbed.

Restoration, not demolition, says Luneta Hotel's new owner

By Allison W. Lopez

BEAUMONT HOLDINGS, THE new owner of the Luneta Hotel in Manila, yesterday announced that the 89-year-old structure would be restored to its previous glory in three years' time.

"We will make it stronger. We will not touch the facade," Adelina Wong, an engineer of the company, said.

The hotel on T. M. Kalaw Street, one of the few remaining structures that survived World War II, has been undergoing "structural rehabilitation and retrofit" since it was bought by Beaumont last August.

Completed in 1918, the Luneta Hotel was designed by Spanish architect-engineer Salvador Farre, according to a study by Dean John Joseph Fernandez of the University of Santo Tomas College of Architecture.

It is being touted as the only structure reminiscent of French Renaissance architecture with Filipino stylized beaux arts in the country, Fernandez said.

The dilapidated building fronting Rizal Park was declared a historical landmark by the National Historical Institute and is protected by Presidential Decree 1505 which makes it unlawful to alter or destroy the original features of an edifice classified by the NHI "without prior written permission from its chair."

Members of the Heritage Conservation Society were initially alarmed over reports that Beaumont had applied for a demolition permit but company representatives and Manila building official Melvin Balagot assured them that the permit issued only allows structural rehabilitation.

Vigilant

"We are vigilant when it comes to that. Mayor (Alfredo) Lim's directive is always to abide by the law. The mayor wants to preserve historic buildings especially if there is a law that protects them," Balagot added.

In May 2006, then Manila Mayor Lito Atienza urged the Department of Public Works and the owners of abandoned private buildings to demolish old and "dangerous" structures, including the Luneta Hotel.

At that time, the hotel was in a state of deterioration due to lack of maintenance, having been uninhabited for a long time. There were also signs of decay, including weakened columns due to old age, falling concrete plaster and a nearly collapsing ground floor frame. The basement was also flooded upon inspection. The threat to public safety especially during earthquakes, stressed Wong, was the immediate reason for the retrofit using modern technology.

Put simply, retrofit would mean "constructing a new structural steel-framed building inside an existing building" to make it safe and sound.

Architect Dominic Galicia, HCS board member, said he was satisfied with the restrictions for the structural renovation which specified that "the existing exterior building (architectural facade) would be retained, there would be no alterations in the existing major architectural treatment and no additional floor levels shall be allowed."

Whimsical

In a 1998 article, INQUIRER columnist and HCS founding member Bambi Harper described the "whimsical gargoyles in the form of lions, crocodiles, griffins and other mythical creatures that serve as decorative supports of (the hotel's) balconies." She also talked about the "delicate filigreed railings (on the balconies) that add a touch of lightness to the solid concrete facade."

The structural renovation would be completed in a year's time said Wong, after which work on the architectural appendages would begin.

A NATIONAL historical landmark, the Luneta Hotel near Rizal Park is undergoing structural rehabilitation according to the company that bought it. NIÑO JESUS ORBETA

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Sumilao farmers' plaint: The bigger picture

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

THE BUKIDNON farmers who are now in Manila after marching 1,700 kilometers are getting a lot of sympathy from the public because their cause is supported by some members of the Catholic Church.

The farmers want 144 hectares of land, once owned by the Quisumbings, to be given to them under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program.

This columnist subscribes to the advocacy of the late President Ramon Magsaysay that "those who have less in life should have more in law."

Between the rich and the poor in the fight for justice, I will always side with the latter. I have helped many aggrieved poor people get justice.

But this time, I am siding with San Miguel Corp., not the farmers from Sumilao. Let me tell you why.

About three years ago, long before the current controversy, I had a conversation over dinner with Ramon Ang, president of San Miguel Corp.

Ang was bubbling with enthusiasm about helping poor farmers get a better deal for corn. The price of their produce fluctuates depending on the season.

The businessman said that SMC, upon the invitation of the Sumilao municipal government, would set up post-harvest facilities to stabilize the price of corn.

The facilities would be the first in a planned integrated agro-industrial complex for Sumilao that would include feed mills, farms for piggery and poultry complete with a treatment plant for waste from the farms and a plan to grow thousands of trees by the river bank.

The SMC head said his company's Sumilao experiment would be duplicated in other parts of the country, if it succeeded, to help other farmers.

"It's San Miguel's way of giving back to the people who have made the firm what it is now," Ang said.

Ang, a former auto mechanic, said helping the poor was an "uplifting experience."

When I read his letter in the INQUIRER's Letters section Monday commenting on Fr. Joaquin Bernas' column taking up the cudgels for the Sumilao farmers, I knew Ang was sincere about what he said.

What he said in reply to Bernas was exactly what he told me three years ago.

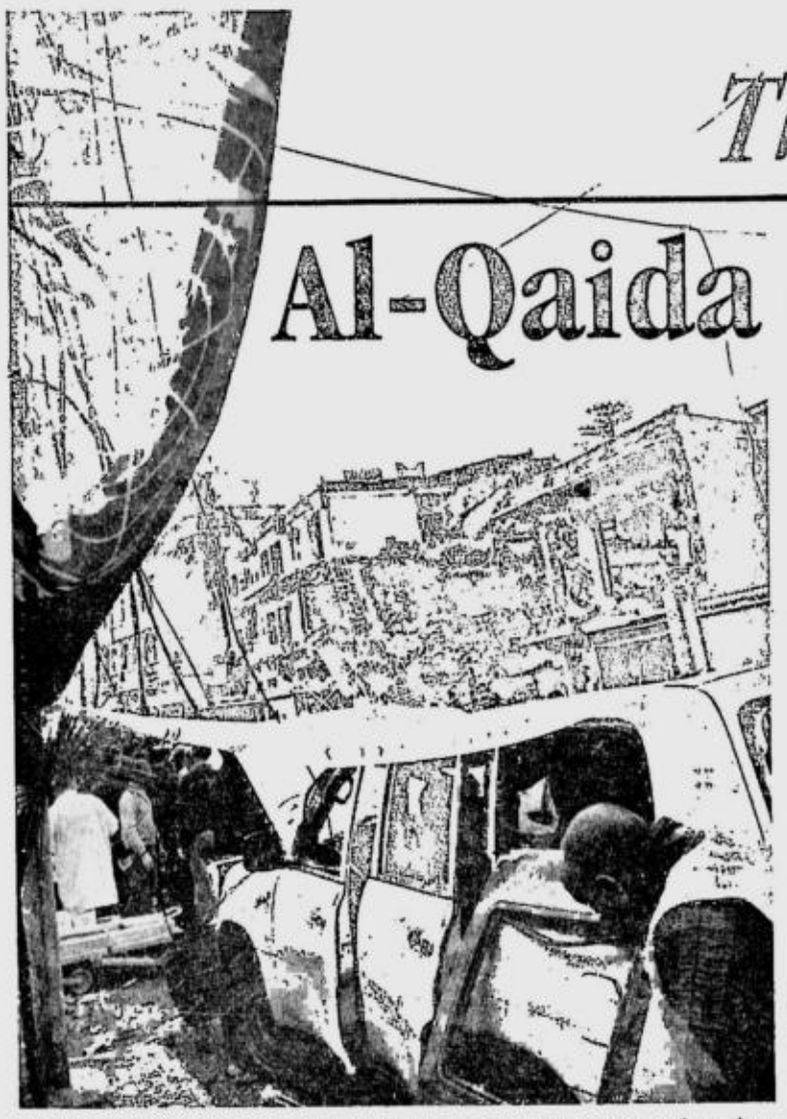
* * *

The farmers' fight for the ownership of a piece of land in Sumilao will benefit only themselves. In terms of a bigger economic picture, the town, and even the entire country, will benefit from SMC's plan for Sumilao.

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Al-Qaida claims deadly Algiers blasts



THE flag of the United Nations is seen at left, as rescuers work at the site of a bomb blast near UN offices in Algiers on Tuesday, Dec. 11. At least 12 UN staff members were still missing. AP

ALGIERS—AL-QAIDA CLAIMED responsibility for a double car bomb strike in Algiers that killed dozens of people as rescuers continued to work on Wednesday to find survivors.

Amid a disputed death toll, rescuers pulled seven people alive from the debris of one of the bombs which tore through the offices of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and other UN agencies, Algerian radio reported.

The second attack killed and maimed students packed in a bus passing a car as it was detonated outside the country's highest court in central Algiers.

The government said 26 people were killed and 177 wounded by the two bombs. Hospital sources gave a toll of 62 dead and about 100 injured.

The United Nations said at least 10 of its staff were killed and several more were still unaccounted for after the attacks as rescuers, 'aided by sniffer dogs, tried to locate injured survivors among the debris.

Stunned families gathered nearby anxiously awaiting news of missing relatives.

One woman shouted and slumped toward the ground after hearing her son was among the dead, and authorities quickly led her away.

Al-Qaida's Branch in the Islamic Maghreb (BAQMI) claimed responsibility for the bombs in a statement published on an Islamist website, the authenticity of which could not be immediately confirmed.

"We are announcing the good news to the Muslim nation," read the statement, alongside photographs it said were the two suicide bombers, named as Abdel Rahmane al-Assmi and Ammi Ibrahim Abou Othmane, carrying assault rifles.

It hailed "the success of the two martyr operations carried out by ... two heroes in Algiers to defend the nation of Islam and to humiliate the crusaders and their agents, the slaves of the United States and the sons of France." The statement said the double bombings "debunked the myth that the inner-core of our group has been destroyed." "This attack reminds the crusaders who are occupying our land and who pillage our wealth of the necessity of paying heed to the demands and addresses of our sheikh and emir Osama bin Laden, God protect him."

The group threatened new attacks. "The mujahideen (fighters) of the Maghreb are volunteering for more martyrdom attacks which will continue until all the lands of Islam are freed ..."

Meanwhile, Algerian 'Prime Minister Abdelaziz Belkhadem insisted on national television that "the official toll that we have given is the real toll," adding: "We have nothing to hide and every drop of Algerian blood counts for us."

It was the latest of a series of bombings in the capital and other major Algerian cities this year that have killed about 100 people. Al-Qaida have claimed responsibility for all of them.

UN chief Ban Ki-moon led international outrage over the attacks. He condemned "in the strongest possible terms the terrorist attacks in Algiers," his office said in a statement.

The United States called them acts of "senseless violence." "We condemn this attack on the United Nations office by these enemies of humanity who attack the innocent," said a White House statement.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy, who made a state visit to Algeria last week, denounced what he called "barbaric, hateful and deeply cowardly acts." *AFP*

US ice storm leaves 24 dead in Midwest

DES MOINES, IOWA—AN ICY winter storm blamed for at least 24 deaths in the Midwest continued to wreak havoc, shutting down Iowa's biggest airport, delaying flights in Chicago and leaving hundreds of thousands without power.

President George W. Bush declared an emergency in Oklahoma on Tuesday, ordering federal aid to supplement state and local response efforts.

State officials in Missouri, Kansas and Oklahoma had already made emergency declarations after ice, some as much as 2.5 cm thick, accumulated on trees, power lines, streets and windshields on Monday.

About 2.5 cm of ice was expected on Tuesday over parts of Iowa, followed by up to 12.7 cm of sleet and snow. "It's a pretty good ice-maker," said Frank Boksa, a National Weather Service forecaster.

About a million customers in the Midwest, including nearly 600,000 Oklahoma homes and businesses, still had no electricity on Tuesday. Power lines began snapping under the weight of ice and falling branches creating the biggest power outage in state history. *AP*

Gas cut targets too ambitious, says UN chief

BALI—IN THE FACE OF US OPposition, the UN chief said on Wednesday guidelines on greenhouse gas emissions cuts favored by Europe and developing countries may be "too ambitious" to include in a final statement on climate change.

Drafts of a final statement at a UN global warming conference this week have included a call for industrialized countries to consider cutting emissions blamed for rising temperature by between 25 percent and 40 percent by 2020.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, however, said such goals might have to wait for subsequent negotiations when asked about steadfast opposition by the United States, though at some point targets for emissions cuts would be necessary.

"Realistically, it may be too ambitious" to set guidelines now, Ban told reporters, while urging Washington to be flexible. Later he added: "Practically speaking, this will have to be negotiated down the road."

The two-week conference, which wraps up Friday, brings together delegates from nearly 190 nations, charged with launching negotiations that will lead to an international accord to succeed the Kyoto Protocol in 2012.

Talks picked up pace on Wednesday with the arrival of ministers and heads of state who urged the world in a series of speeches to quickly impose deep cuts in emissions to head off scientific predictions of rising seas, worsening droughts and famines, and melting ice sheets.

BAN AP

The European Union and developing nations strongly favor specific target ranges for emissions, which they say are needed to avoid temperatures rising above 2 degrees Celsius over preindustrial levels.

The United States, however, has argued strenuously at Bali that including such language in the final document would prejudice negotiations over the next two years.

"The reality in this business is that once numbers appear in the text, it prejudges the outcome and will tend to drive the negotiations in one direction," said Harlan Watson, a lead US negotiator.

Many negotiators at Bali have said that a top priority was getting an agreement that the United States could work with, but German Environment Minister Sigmar Gabriel—whose government has pledged to cut emissions by 40 percent by 2020—said the Bali conference would be meaningless without targets. *AP*

WORLDBRIEFS

Triple car bombs

BASRA—Dozens of people were killed and more than 100 wounded when three car bombs exploded in quick succession in a southern Iraqi Shiite city of Amara on Wednesday, police and hospital officials said. A doctor at the emergency unit of the biggest hospital in Amara said 26 bodies and 100 wounded had been brought in. The bombs exploded along a main street in the city. *Reuters*

Macau corruption trial

HONG KONG—Macau's biggest ever corruption trial ended on Wednesday with prosecutors calling for a guilty verdict for a former top government minister accused of taking tens of millions of dollars in kickbacks in the southern Chinese gambling enclave. Ao Man-long, a former transport and public works secretary, was arrested a year ago and faced 76 counts of taking bribes, laundering money and abusing power to help property developers win lucrative construction tenders. *AP*

Apartment fire deaths

BEIJING—A fire tore through an apartment building in eastern China early Wednesday, killing at least 21 people and injuring two others, the official Xinhua News Agency said. Some 213 people were rescued after the blaze broke out around 8:20 a.m. in the Wenfu Mansion in Wenzhou, a city in Zhejiang province, Xinhua said, citing fire officials. Twelve men and nine women died from burns and smoke inhalation, Xinhua said. *AP*

Las Vegas shooting

LAS VEGAS—Assailants shot six young people at a school bus stop, wounding two critically, in a midday attack that followed a fight over a girl, authorities said. School police arrested three teenagers in the fight that happened hours before the shooting on Tuesday, Sheriff Doug Gillespie said. Investigators were still seeking two gunmen, who were believed to have fled on foot from the scene of the shooting. *AP*

CIA director distances self from videotapes

WASHINGTON—GEN. MICHAEL V. Hayden, the director of the Central Intelligence Agency, distanced himself on Tuesday from the decision to record and subsequently destroy hundreds of hours of video taken during the interrogations of senior Qaida captives.

Speaking in public after delivering classified testimony before a Senate committee, Hayden said that the decision to record the interrogations in 2002 was made under George J. Tenet, then the director of central intelligence, and that the destruction of those tapes in 2005 came under the watch of Porter J. Goss, who succeeded Tenet.

"There are other people at the agency who know about this far better than I," Hayden said after he testified before the Senate Intelligence Committee. He had become the agency director in May 2006, six months after intelligence officials have said the tapes were destroyed.

Congressional officials said Tuesday that they would probably call Goss and Tenet before the committee as part of its investigation.

In a statement to agency employees last Thursday, Hayden indicated that he supported the decision to destroy the videos. He did not reiterate that support in his public comments Tuesday, although he did not say the decision was wrong.

Congressional officials said that Hayden tried to provide a timeline of events surrounding the destruction of the tapes that he had constructed from agency records. *New York Times News Service*

Canada serial killer sentenced to life

VANCOUVER—CONVICTED mass murderer Robert "Willy" Pickton was sentenced by a Canadian court on Tuesday to life in prison, with a chance of parole after serving 25 years.

A jury found Pickton, 58, guilty on six counts of second-degree murder Sunday. He faces a second trial next year on another 20 charges of murdering women in this Pacific Coast city.

Prosecutors in the first trial said Pickton had picked up prostitutes from Vancouver's squalid Downtown Eastside, killed them, butchered them and disposed of their bodies by feeding them to pigs or taking them to a rendering plant.

Prosecutors had asked the judge to sentence Pickton to the maximum 25 years in jail before possible parole. "The extent (and) depravity of the circumstances are unique," said prosecutor Geoff Baragar.

He said remorse is always a consideration in lenient sentencing and added, "There is no evidence of remorse." The defense had asked for incarceration of 10 to 20 years.

Judge James Williams pegged Pickton's sentencing starting in 2002, when he was first arrested for the murders. His punishment is the maximum under Canadian law. *AFP*

Republic of the Philippines

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

SEC Building, EDSA, Greenhills
Mandaluyong City

SEC Memorandum Circular No. 6
Series of 2007

To: ALL CONCERNED
Subject: Definition of Qualified Buyers under Section 10 of the Securities Regulation Code

Pursuant to its authority under Section 10.1 (l)(vi) of the Securities Regulation Code, the Securities and Exchange Commission (the "Commission"), in its meeting on December 4, 2007, resolved to issue the following rules on the determination of a "qualified buyer."

Section 1: A "qualified individual buyer" shall be a natural person who, at the time of his or her registration with a Self Regulatory Organization, or such other entities that the Commission may authorize to make the registration, possesses the following qualifications:

a) Has a minimum annual gross income of Twenty Five Million Pesos (PhP25,000,000) for at least two years prior to registration; or a total portfolio investment in securities registered with the Commission of at least Ten Million pesos (PhP10,000,000); or a personal net worth of not less than Thirty Million Pesos (PhP30,000,000);

AND

b) Has been engaged in securities trading, in his personal capacity or through a fund manager, for a period of one year, or held for at least two years a position of responsibility in any professional or business entity that requires knowledge or expertise in securities trading, such as, legal consultant; financial adviser; sales person or associated person of a broker-dealer; or finance, treasury or trust officer of a bank or other executive positions with related responsibilities.

Section 2: A juridical person shall be considered a "qualified institutional buyer" if it possesses any of the following qualifications at the time of its registration in the same manner described above;

a) Has a minimum annual gross income of at least One Hundred Million Pesos (PhP100,000,000) for at least two years prior for registration;

b) A total portfolio investment in securities registered with the Commission of at least Sixty Million Pesos (PhP60,000,000);

c) A net worth of not less than One Hundred Million (PhP100,000,000).

Section 3: All applications for registration as "qualified buyer" shall be accompanied by the following documents:

a) Signed Information Sheet (see Annex 1 for Qualified Individual Buyers and Annex 2 for Qualified Institutional Buyers);

b) Proof of the applicant's qualifications; and

c) Copies of income tax returns for the preceding two years, as filed and stamped "received" by the Bureau of Internal Revenue;

Section 4: The registration shall be valid for two years, provided that any application for renewal should be accompanied by a favorable recommendation of the authorized registrar and shall be subject to the approval of the Commission.

Section 5: The registry book of the authorized registrants shall at all times be open for review or inspection by the Commission.

Section 6: No securities purchased by "qualified buyers" shall be assigned, transferred or sold to non-qualified investors.

Section 7: This Memorandum Circular shall take effect on January 15, 2008.

December 10, 2007, Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila.

(Sgd.) **Fe B. Barin**
Chairperson

(PDI—Dec. 13, 2007)

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WHAT'S INSIDE

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■ **Alcano** rules 8-ball, matches Amit's feat /A24

Lean day drops RP bets to 6th

Albania survives Thai juggernaut in boxing

By Ernesto A. Gonzales
Sports Features Editor

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—ANNIE ALBANIA BROKE THROUGH the expected Thailand juggernaut in boxing and Ronnie Alcano upheld the country's lofty status in billiards Wednesday as the Philippines scrounged for golds from all likely sources but still fell to sixth place overall in the 24th Southeast Asian Games here.

Sheila Mae Perez delivered from the diving platform as expected while Amaya Paz nailed a second gold in archery by powering the women's compound team past an Indonesian squad to give the defending overall champion Filipinos 33 gold medals with two full days of competition left in this 11-nation sportsfest.

The Filipinos clinched the coveted basketball crown with one game left to play, the two softball squads stood just a victory away from retaining their titles and Cecil Mamiit forged another showdown against Thai Danai Udomchoke for the men's singles plum in tennis.

But the Fil-Am reinforced cagebelles had to settle for the bronze medal, their faint hopes for the gold shattered by the unforgiving and defending champion Malaysians, who cruised to a 74-56 win and a showdown for the title with Thailand.

Boosted by an 11-gold rampage for the day, Malaysia moved up to third overall with 42 victories, sweeping past Singapore which slid to fourth with 38 wins. And Indonesia inched ahead of the Philippines with 37 golds after a harvest of 12 Wednesday.

Thailand still emerged the most productive nation with 20 victories that moved it within three golds of matching its total target of 120. Vietnam was a hopelessly outclassed second with 57.

Albania pulled off the lone knockout win for the day to retain her women's flyweight title over Hansa Kadeewong, but her five other teammates proved easy preys for their respective Thai rivals.

Albania smashed Kaseewong to the canvas for good with an overhand right to the face. The referee countedg out the Thai with 36 seconds gone in the first round.

It was the lone break in an all-Thailand show of ring superiority, leaving light flyweight Alice Kate Aparri, light bantam Annalisa Cruz, bantam Jouvilet Chilem, feather Ronijen Sofla and light Mitchel Martinez with silvers.

In fairness to the Thais, they won without exploiting their famous hometown bias—although there were some officiating lapses—and the seven Filipino fighters going up against the hosts in the all-male finals Thursday can more or less expect to get a fair shake if they perform well.

The lanky Alcano, who broke into prominence by winning the World Pool 9-ball title last year, captured the men's 8-ball singles gold with a scrambling 9-6 win over Singapore's Choon Kiat Tey, 9-6.

It was the second gold for the billiards team after Rubilen Amit's victory in the women's 9-ball singles although the country's top female cue artist failed to keep her 8-ball crown on Tuesday and wound up with just a bronze.

Perez, who won three golds in Manila two years ago, defended her women's 3-meter springboard crown over Malaysian Leong Mun Yee while Paz, the individual winner of the event, boosted his partnership with Jennifer Chan and Abbigail Tindugan to the women's compound team gold.

The Harbour Centre-Philippine five outplayed Malaysia, 108-60, and put the gold away with its third straight win under the single-round format since Thailand, its final foe on Thursday, already has two losses.

Mamiit, beaten by Udomchoke in the singles of the team event last Friday, gained another shot at the Thai No. 1 after crushing Ny San Tan of Vietnam in the semifinals, 6-0, 6-2.

Udomchoke ousted Elbert Sie of Indonesia, 6-4, 6-0, after eliminating Fil-Am Eric Taino, 6-2, 7-6, in the quarterfinals.

The golden promise in golf disappeared with the defending champion men's team falling behind by 19 strokes after three rounds and the women squad dropping to second, three shots off the Thais.

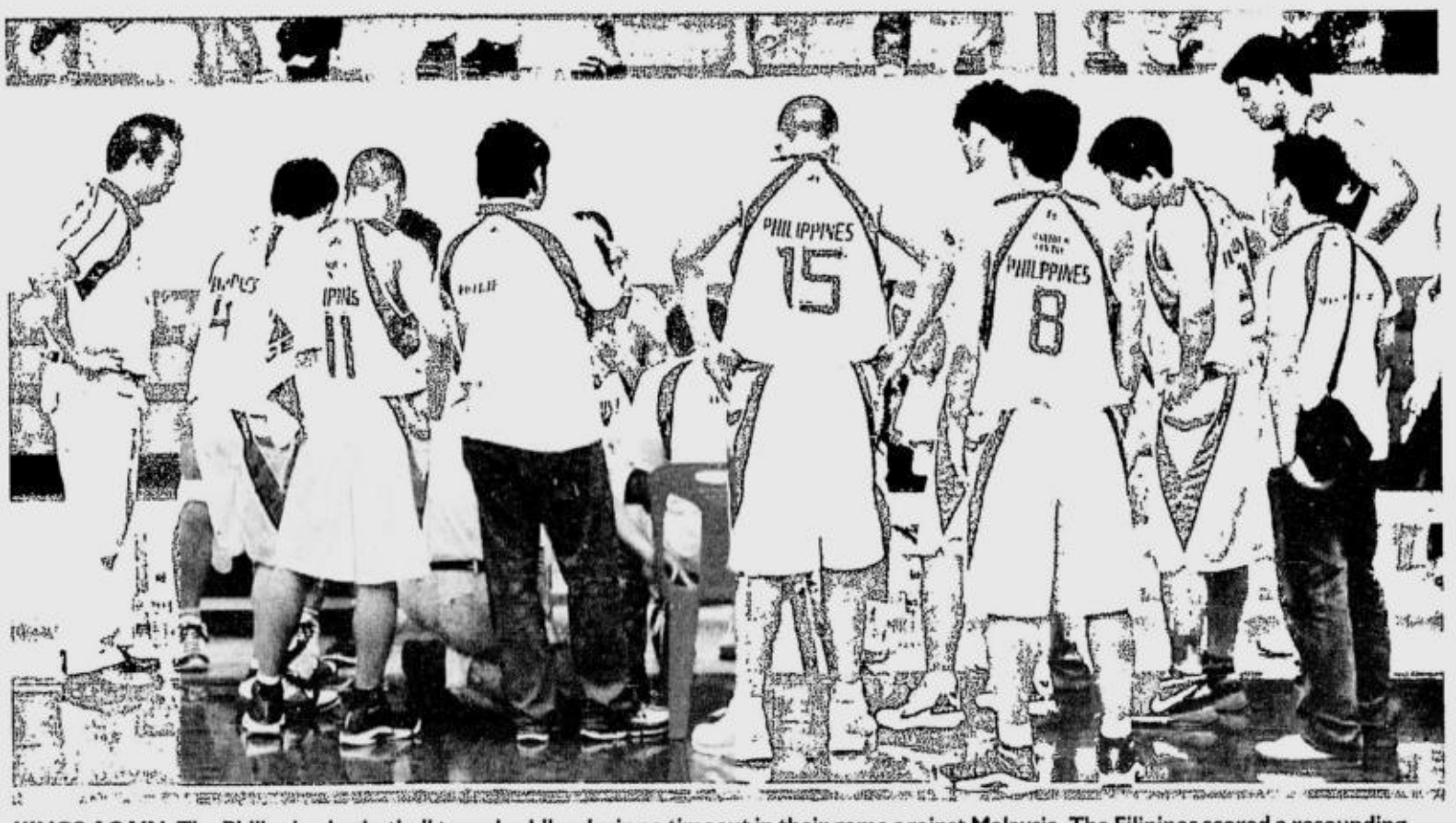
With all four players ripping par, the Putra Cup champion Thais posted a 630 total against the 649 of the Filipinos, who trailed the second-running Malaysians by three strokes and Indonesia by two.

The female golfers still have a shot at first place, however, with Anya Tanpinco just a shot off individual leader P. Kongkraphan of Thailand with a 3-under 141 and their team only three down at 289.

Touted as a major gold contributor, taekwondo could produce only two silver medals for the day courtesy of Marie Antoinette Rivero and Alex Briones.

Rivero, who came to the tournament after securing an Olympic

LEAN DAY/ A22



KINGS AGAIN: The Philippine basketball team huddles during a timeout in their game against Malaysia. The Filipinos scored a resounding triumph to virtually clinch the Southeast Asian Games gold medal in the men's basketball event. INQUIRER PHOTO / RAFFY LERMA

SEA GAMES Medal Tally

COUNTRY	G	S	B				
Thailand	119	102	82	Philippines	33	51	76
Vietnam	57	43	59	Myanmar	7	19	29
Malaysia	44	36	72	Laos	4	2	23
Indonesia	38	46	63	Cambodia	2	3	8
Singapore	38	33	31	Brunei	1	1	4
				Timor Leste	0	0	0

Filipino officials mulling pullout

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—Certain officials of Team Philippines suspect host Thailand of resorting to dirty tactics to have decisions in subjective sports in the 24th SEA Games go in its favor.

Complaints over alleged biased judging and scoring in such events as judo, karate-do, taekwondo and boxing have reportedly prompted the officials to consider pulling their athletes out of their remaining events.

"*Iniihaw tayo rito sa* (They're roasting us here in) Thailand," rued Bacolod Rep. Monico Puentevella, the RP deleation's chief of mission.

A meeting among the officials was scheduled later Wednesday.

"We will discuss all our options," said an RP delegation insider. "The primary option is to walk out of the events or boycott them completely."

After watching four female boxers lose on points in the finals Wednesday, Puentevella said he would call for a meeting of the country's delegation officials.

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SEAG medalists to get extra bonus

NAKHON RATCHASHIMA—FILipino medalists in the 24th Southeast Asian Games will get an extra bonus for Christmas from President Macapagal-Arroyo, Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose Cojuangco Jr. said late Tuesday.

"I have been informed by Malacañang that President Arroyo will give all of our Southeast Asian Games medalists bonuses, regardless whether they win the gold, silver or bronze," said Cojuangco.

"However, I was not informed how much they will get," Cojuangco added. "But this should be a welcome development for our athletes."

He pointed out that the cash gifts were on top of the regular incentives given by the government through the Philippine Sports Commission for SEAG medalists.

Under the scheme, an individual gold medalist gets P100,000, the silver is worth P50,000 and the bronze P10,000.

THE PHILIPPINES' Roxas Ma. Criselda (left) launches a kick against Vietnam's Bui Thu Hien in the women's +67kg taekwondo in the 24th Southeast Asian Games in Thailand. REUTERS

RP five rips Malaysia, puts hoop title in bag

GAME THURSDAY
3 p.m.—Philippines vs Thailand (M)
5 p.m.—Thailand vs Malaysia (W)

By Musong R. Castillo

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—SHOWING HUNGER unusual for such a fancied side, the Philippine men's team played without letup and swamped Malaysia, 108-60, Wednesday night in the first of two games the Filipinos need to win to formally rule the 24th Southeast Asian Games basketball tournament.

Al Vergara scored 14 points and led six others in twin digits as the Filipinos started hot and doubled up on the Malaysians at the end of the third to post win No. 3 in the same overpowering style that reaffirmed their lofty status in the region.

The title was unofficially clinched by the Philippines when it dominated Indonesia, 75-49, on Tuesday, but the Filipinos still need to come out against the Thais Thursday and would not even need a win to bag the gold that truly matters back home.

As things stand, the Filipinos can still win the gold medal even if they lose by 25 points to the Thais since that would give them a 3-1 card, tied with the Indonesians, whom they ripped apart by 26.

The Filipinos, seeking to win an eighth straight gold medal in this event, have now won their three games by an average of nearly 43 points with host Thailand the only one standing in the way—if that can even be said.

Gabe Norwood, the Fil-American leader of the team, didn't even have to push himself, taking just one field goal attempt—and making it—to finish with only two points, the least from among 12 men coach Junel Baculi utilized.

"The team is very well motivated," Baculi said after moving on the threshold of his first SEAG crown as a coach.

"We spent more than P20 million preparing this team since the Seaba, but this gold just made it worth all that amount," said Harbour Centre owner Mikee Romero, the cage delegation head who bankrolled the team since early this year.

Norwood, though, made contributions in other departments as he wound up with five rebounds, six assists and two steals in less than 20 minutes on the floor.

Jeff Chan and Allan Salangsang had 12 points each, Beau Belga and Chad Alonzo chipped in 11 each and National University hotshot Jonathan Fernandez and reigning UAAP MVP Jervy Cruz contributed 10 each.

Malaysia was out of it right in the first quarter as it trailed by 19 before the Filipinos turned up the heat some more at the Keelapirom Stadium here and ended the third period with an 86-43 lead.

The RP women's team went out of the tournament in a bad way, losing lopsidedly to Malaysia, 56-74, for a 1-2 card that meant another failed attempt to win its event for the first time in its SEAG participation.

Held to just ten points in the first period to trail by nine, the Filipinos didn't show the need to mount a comeback and steadily drifted back.

The Thais and the Malaysians dispute the women's title Thursday at 5 p.m. (6 p.m. Manila time) shortly after the RP men's team tries to close out the round robin tournament.unscathed also against Thailand at 3 p.m.

The scores:

Women's Game

MALAYSIA 74—Chow 16, Goh 14, Kew 13, Teo 8, Beh 7, Yong 6, Low 4, Pee 3, Hee 3.

PHILIPPINES 56—Grajales 13, Brick 10, Tioseco 7, Tolentino 7, Jacob 6, Vega 6, Issa 6, Valencia 1, Jose 0, Narciza 0, Matsuno 0.

Quarters: 19-10, 38-23, 52-39, 74-56

Men's Game

PHILIPPINES 108—Vergara 14, Chan 12, Salangsang 12, Belga 11, Alonzo 11, Fernandez 10, Cruz 10, Castro 9, Bautista 8, Tan 5, Rodriguez 4, Norwood 2.

MALAYSIA 60—Chee 12, Cheong 10, Lau 9, Koh 7, Soo 5, Loh 5, Tan 2, Ang 2, Koo 2, Kuppusamy 0.

Quarters: 33-14, 55-32, 86-43, 108-60

Lean day drops...

From page A21

slot last month in Vietnam, blew her bid for a third straight Games' gold, losing to Thailand's Cassandra Haller, 5-4, in the under 67 kg final.

Briones, who was with Rivero in the Vietnam Olympic qualifier, bowed to Vietnam's Nguyen Trong Wong, 7-4, in the under 84 kg division.

Aside from the five runner-up finishes in boxing, three other silvers came from Noel Espinosa in the individual men's kata in karate-do, Nerlyn Huinda in the under 60kg in pencak silat and in the men's 10-crew 1,000-meter event in traditional boat racing.

The two female beach volley pairs—Heidi Ilustre-Diane Pascua and Michelle Laborte-Michella Carolino—advanced to the quarterfinals and the Filipinos remained on course in their bid to hang on to their baseball crown.

But the medal-starved bowlers in Bangkok continued to struggle with Biboy Rivera running fifth in the men's Masters qualilfying with 1661 pins followed by Raoul Miranda with 1636. Liza Clutario was also fifth in the women's Masters with 1610.

Remy Ong of Singapore paced the men's division with 1819 while Sharon Koh led the women's section with 1696.

IN THE FINALS The Philippines' Danica Calapatan performs in the rope competition of women's rhythmic gymnastics Wednesday at the 24th Southeast Asian Games. Calapatan made it to the medal round. AP

Singson sets sights on SEAG vindication

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—Esther Marie Singson is out for Southeast Asian Games redemption and the only way to do it is to win her event in the biennial meet's 24th edition.

"(It is) Extra motivation *para sa akin, ang bumawi dito sa* (for me to win in the) SEA Games," she said Wednesday as the RP taekwondo jins geared for battle.

The five-foot-three Singson is entered anew in the under -55kg class, the same event she topped two years ago in Manila.

But a mandatory drug test days after the event showed banned substance in her urine. The result was overturned and her gold taken away.

Singson said the substance came from a slimming tea she drank to keep her weight down. Representations by her and the sport's officials were of no use.

"*Gusto ko na talagang mag-* (I really wanted to) quit *pagkatapos nu'n* (after that incident," said Singson. "*Pero payo ng mga kaibigan, pati ng mama ko, na ituloy ko lang daw* (But my friends, and even my mother, advised me not to)."

Singson regained her RP Team slot by emerging as the best player of the Carlos Palanca Jr. championship held in early 2006. She then secured her slot here by winning the gold in the Asean championships in Vung Tau, Vietnam last October.

Beach volley tandems enter knockout stage

By Musong R. Castillo

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—THE PHILIPPINES put two teams into the knockout phase of the women's beach volleyball event in the 24th Southeast Asian Games with Diane Pascua and Heidi Ilustre nailing the No. 2 slot in Pool B.

Michelle Laborte and Michella Carolino were the No. 4 qualifiers in Pool A as Thailand topped both groups and could well arrange an all-Thai match for the gold medal.

There were actually four countries which occupied the eight total slots in the KO phase, with Malaysia and Indonesia the other two.

Pascua-Ilustre, which is being honed for the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing, finished with a 4-1 record, while Carolino-Laborte wound up with a 2-3 slate.

Carolino-Laborte, being the final Pool A qualifier, drew the strongest team from Pool B as a quarterfinal foe, the Yupa Phokongploy-Kulna Kamoltip team that went unbeaten in five classification matches like the other Thai team.

Pascua-Ilustre slugs it out with the Devota Rahawarin-Yokbeth Kapasiang squad from Indonesia with a win putting the Filipinos into a semifinal confrontation with the Tenpaksee Usa-Sannok Jarunee squad from Thailand.

Usa-Januree will clash with the Malaysian pair of Teng Kee Luk and Isw Ari Manokharan, the No. 4 Pool B qualifier, at 2 p.m. (3 p.m. Manila time) Thursday at the His Majesty the King's 80th Birth Anniversary courts here.

Filipino medalists (As of Dec. 12, 2007)

GOLD

1. Joey Barba, Mountain Bike (Men's Downhill)
2. Ryan Arabejo, Swimming (Men's 200m Back)
3. Miguel Molina, Swimming (Men's 400m Indiv. Medley)
4. Rene Herrera, Athletics (Men's 3000m Steeplechase)
5. Arniel Ferrera, Athletics (Men's Hammer Throw)
6. Benjamin Tolentino Jr. and Jose Rodriguez, Rowing (Men's Double Sculls)
7. Ryan Mendoza, Triathlon (Men's Duathlon)
8. Marestella Torres, Athletics (Women's Long Jump)
9. Emmanuel Reyes and Maira Rosete, Dance Sport (Standard Quickstep)
10. E. Reyes and M. Rosete, Dance Sport, (Standard Tango)
11. Michelle Bruzola, Fencing (Women's Individual Epee)
12. Emerson Segui, Fencing (Men's Individual Foil)
13. Antonio Gabica and Marlon Manalo, Billiards and Snooker (Men's 9-Ball Doubles)
14. Miguel Molina, Swimming (Men's 200m Indiv. Medley)
15. B. Tolentino, Rowing (Men's Lightweight Singles Sculls)
16. Rubilen Amit, Billiards (Women's 9-Ball Pool Singles)
17. Mariana Mariano, Wushu (Women's Under 60kg)
18. Willy Wang, Wushu (Men's Nanquan, 3 events combined)
19. Henry Dagmil, Athletics (Men's Long Jump)
20. Daniel Coakley, Swimming (Men's 50m Free)
21. Miguel Molina, Swimming (Men's 200m Breast)
22. Ryan Arabejo, Swimming (Men's 1500m Free)
23. Victor Espiritu, Track Cycling (Men's Points Race)
24. Amaya Paz, Archery (Women's Individual Compound)
25. Julius Felicisimo Nierras Jr., Athletics (Men's 400m)
26. Armando Bernal, Avelino Victorino Jr., Almario Vizcayno and Wilfredo Vizcayno Jr., Fencing (Men's Team Epee)
27. Allie Catalan, Track Cycling (Men's Individual Pursuit)
28. James Walsh, Swimming (Men's 200m Butterfly)
29. Miguel Molina, Daniel Coakley, James Walsh and Ryan Arabejo, Swimming (Men's 4x100 Medley Relay)
30. Jennifer Chan, Amaya Paz and Abbigail Tindugan, Archery (Women's Compound)
31. Ronato Alcano, Billiards (Men's 8-Ball Pool Singles)
32. Annie Albania, Boxing (Women's Fly 50kg)
33. Sheila Mae Perez, Aquatics (Diving, Women's 3m Springboard)

SILVER

1. Eric Ang, Carag Carlos and Jethro Dionisio, Shooting (Men's Trap Team)
2. Jaqueline De Guzman, Shooting (Women's Skeet)
3. Paul Brian Rosario, Patricio Bernardo and Gabriel Tong, Shooting (Men's Skeet Team)
4. Mary Grace Milgar, Athletics (Women's 400m Hurdles)
5. Julius Sermona, Athletics (Men's 500m)
6. Rosie Villarito, Athletics (Women's Javelin Throw)
7. Eusebio Quinones, Mountain Bike (Men's Cross Country)
8. Alvin Amposta and Nestor Cordova, Rowing (Men's Lightweight Double Sculls)
9. Marcus Valda, Wrestling (Men's Freestyle 84kg)
10. Midel Digue, Athletics (Men's 800m)
11. Harlene Orendain, Fencing (Women's Individual Epee)
12. Gemma Silverio, Wrestling (Women's Freestyle 59kg)
13. Alven Aragon, Wrestling (Men's Freestyle 74kg)
14. Jimmy Angana , Wrestling (Men's Freestyle 66kg)
15. Nida Cordova and Midelle Gabilgno, Rowing (Women's Double Sculls)
16. George Vilog, Triathlon (Men's Event)
17. Alessandra Araullo, Triathon (Women's Event)
18. Reyes and Rosete, Dance Sport (Standard Viennese Waltz)
19. Reyes and Rosete, Dance Sport (Standard Slow Foxtrot)
20. John Erolle Melencio and Dearlie Gerodias, Dance Sport (Latin American Jive)
21. J. Melencio and D. Gerodias, Dance Sport (Latin American Paso Doble)
22. Walbert Mendoza, Fencing (Men's Individual Sabre)
23. James Walsh, Swimming (Men's 100m Butterfly)
24. Miguel Molina, Daniel Coakley, Kendrick Uy and James Walsh, Swimming (Men's 4x100m Freestyle Relay)
25. Julius Sermona, Athletics (Men's 1000m)
26. Mary Jane Estmar, Wushu (Women's Under 52 kg)
27. Benjie Rivera, Wushu (Men's Under 56 kg)
28. Mark Denver Atienza, Rolando Canlas Jr., Ramil Endriano and Emerson Segui, Fencing (Men's Team Foil)
29. Mary Rose Alfonso, Joanna Franquelli, Ma. Wendelyn Mendoza, Lenila Otadoy, Fencing (Women's Team Sabre)
30. Earl Benjamin Yap, Archery (Men's Individual Compound)
31. Danilo Fresnido, Athletics (Men's Javelin Throw)
32. Deborah Samson, Athletics (Women's Pole Vault)
33. Mia Allyson Howell, Michelle Mancenido, Veena Tessa Nuestro and Ma. Dinah Remolacio, Fencing (Women's Team Foil)
34. Water Polo (Men)
35. Renante Briones, Weightlifting (Men's 94 kg)
36. Edward Dativo, Walbert Mendoza, Gian Carlo Nocom and Edmon Velez, Fencing (Men's Team Sabre)
37. Nancy Quillotes, Judo (Women's -48kg)
38. Rugby (Men)
39. Erica Totten, Swimming (Women's 200m Butterfly)
40. Alice Kate Aparri, Boxing (Women's Light Fly 48kg)
41. Annalisa Cruz, Boxing (Women's Light Bantam 52kg)
42. Jouveliet Chilem, Boxing (Women's Bantam 54kg)
43. Ronijen Sofia, Boxing (Women's Feather 57kg)
44. Mitchel Martinez, Boxing (Women's Light 60kg)
45. Noel Espinosa, Karate (Individual Men's Kata)
46. Nerlyn Huinda, Pencak Silat (Women's Under 60kg)
47. Men's Team, Traditional Boat Race (10 Crews 1000m)
48. Nancy Bercasio and Sonia Bruce, Lawn Bowls (Women's Pairs)
49. Alexander Briones, Taekwondo (Men's Under 84kg)
50. Diego Lorenzo, Equestrian (Individual Jumping)
51. Antoinette Rivero, Taekwondo (Women's Under 67kg)

BRONZE

1. Emerito Concepcion, Shooting (Men's 10m Air Rifle)
2. Men's Hoop, Sepak Takraw
3. Women's Hoop, Sepak Takraw
4. Eliezer Sunang, Athletics (Men's Shot Put)
5. Jobert Delicano, Athletics (Men's Triple Jump)
6. Nino Surban, Mountain Bike (Men's Cross Country)
7. Marites Bitbit, Mountain Bike (Women's Cross Country)
8. Maribel Jambora, Wrestling (Women's Freestyle 48kg)
9. Ma. Cristina Vergara, Wrestling (Women's Freestyle 51kg)
10. Clotheide Nillas and Johnalyn Pedrita, Rowing (Women's Lightweight Double Sculls)
11. Frederick Taino and Cecil Mamiit, Tennis (Men's Team)
12. Denise Dy and Diane Matias, Tennis (Women's Team)
13. August Benedicto, Triathlon (Men's Duathlon)
14. Analiza Dysangco, Triathlon (Women's Duathlon)
15. Reyes and Rosete, Dance Sport (Standard Waltz)
16. Reynato Rener Mercado and Judith Anne Melencio, Dance Sport (Latin American Cha Cha Cha)
17. Rolando Canlas Jr., Fencing (Men's Individual Foil)
18. Joanna Franquelli, Fencing (Women's Individual Sabre)
19. Arnold Villarube, Athletics (Men's Decathlon)
20. Junrey Bano, Julius Felicisimo Nierras Jr., Rodrigo Tanuan Jr. and Ernie Candelario, Athletics (Men's 4x400 Relay)
21. Kendrick Uy, Swimming (Men's 100m Free)
22. Jaclyn Pangilinan, Swimming (Women's 100m Breast)
23. Nicole Santiago, Jaclyn Pangilinan, Georgina Gandionco and Erica Totten, Swimming (Women's 4x100m Freestyle Relay)
24. Eduardo Buenavista, Athletics (Men's Marathon)
25. Jho Ann Banayag, Athletics (Women's Marathon)
26. Jose Rodriguez, Rowing (Men's Single Sculls)
27. Arland Macasieb, Triathlon (Men)
28. Maria Meliza Lucas, Triathlon (Women)
29. Hidilyn Diaz, Weightlifting (Women's 58 kg)
30. Margarito Angana, Wrestling (Men's Freestyle 55 kg)
31. Daniel Pakantac, Wushu (Men's Taijiquan-2 events)
32. Janice Hung, Wushu (Women's Taijiquan-2 events)
33. Bill Vicente Vicera, Boxing (Men's Fin 45kg)
34. M. Bitbit, Road Cycling (Women's Individual Time Trial)
35. J. Melencio and D. Gerodias, Dance Sport (Latin American Samba)
36. Claro Roland, Muay Thai (Flyweight 51 kg)
37. Rene Catalan, Wushu (Men s Under 52 kg)
38. Michelle Mancenido and Veena Tessa Nuestro (tie), Fencing (Women's Individual Foil)
39. Edmon Velez, Fencing (Men's Individual Sabre)
40. Ryan Arabejo, Swimming (Men's 400m Freestyle)
41. Reynato Rener Mercado and Judith Anne Melencio, Dance Sport (Latin American Cha Cha Cha)
42. Robert Andrew Garcia, Squash (Men's Singles)
43. Roque Mana-ay Jr., Wrestling (Men's Freestyle 60kg)
44. Michelle Bruzola, Ma. del Carmen Galvez, Mary Catherine Kong and Harlene Orendain, Fencing (Women's Team Epee)
45. Romnick Ghie Pabalate, Muay Thai (Light Fly 48 kg)
46. Jul-Omar Abdulhakim, Pencak Silat (Men's Under 50kg)
47. Emraida Asmad, Pencak Silat (Women's Under 55kg)
48. Laruan Zaidi, Muay Thai (Feather 57kg)
49. Emerson Obiena, Athletics (Men's Pole Vault)
50. Jan Paul Morales, Cycling Track (Men's 1km Time Trial)
51. Jaclyn Pangilinan, Swimming (Women's 200m Breast)
52. Erica Totten, Swimming (Women's 200m Free)
53. Daniel Parantac, Wushu (Men's Taijiquan-2 events)
54. Mercedita Manipol, Athletics (Women's 10,000m)
55. Narcisa Atienza, Athletics (Women's Heptathlon)
56. Albert Pabila, Boxing (Light Fly 48kg)
57. Olod Jay, Muay Thai (Light 60 kg)
58. Harold Gregorio Jay, Muay Thai (Men's Welter 67kg)
60. Dulce Purugganan, Bodybuilding (Women's Fitness)
61. Marvin Cordero, Mark Javier and Ian Wayne Larsen, Archery (Men's Recurve)
62. Helen Dawa, Judo (Women -52 kg Half-Light)
63. Estiegay, Liwanen Judo (Women -57 kg Light)
64. Mae Soriano, Karate (Women's Under 53kg)
65. Ramon Hector Franco, Karate (Men's Under 55kg)
66. Rolando Lagman, Karate (Men's Under 65kg)
67. Jul-Omar Abdulhakim, Pencak Silat (Men's Under 50 kg)
68. Emraida Asmad, Pencak Silat (Women's Under 55kg)
69. Women's Team, Sepak Takraw (Regu)
70. Juan Ernesto Mendoza III, Taekwondo (Men's Under 78kg)
71. Women's Team, Traditional Boat Race (10 Crews 1000m)
72. Richard Pep Agosto, Weightlifting (Men's 105 kg)
73. Rosita Bradborn, Lawn Bowls (Women's Singles)
74. Angelo Morales, Emmanuel Portacio and Hommer Mercado, Lawn Bowls (Men's Triples)
75. Aine Knight, Maita Witheridge and Ronalyn Greenlees Lawn Bowls (Women's Triples)
76. Ma. Criselda Roxas, Taekwondo (Women's Under 72kg)

Three-gold sweep within grasp in softball, baseball

By Ernesto A. Gonzales

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—THE two golds in softball lay just a game within reach while the baseball plum was just two victories from the grasp of the Philippines on Wednesday at the 24th Southeast Asian Games here.

The RP Blu Girls blanked Singapore, 7-0, in the semifinals at the Nakhon Ratchasima Rajabhat University football field and they will likely meet the same team again for the gold medal under the page system on Thursday.

Same situation

That's the same situation for the Blu Boys, who turned back Indonesia, 3-1, to reach the finals where they are expected to meet the same Indons under the same format.

Both defending champion teams are undefeated so far with the Blu Girls on a four-game streak and the Blu Boys on a five-game roll although they needed to score a run each in the last three innings to down the Indonesians Thursday.

Meanwhile, the baseball squad finally gave up a run before pulling away to a 6-1 victory over Burma (Myanmar) at the Queen Sirikit Sports Center in Bangkok.

Third straight win

From a 1-1 tie after the first inning, the Filipinos stormed to a 5-1 lead after the fifth before adding another run in the ninth to seal their third straight victory.

Thailand later showed its title potential by overwhelming Malaysia, 34-0, in five innings to grab the lead with a 4-0 slate in the six-team field playing a single round robin to decide the title.

Capping the onslaught with an 18-run fourth inning, the Thais came close to matching the tournament's most lopsided win, a 37-1 rout scored by Indonesia against Cambodia last Sunday while improving on the 31-0 victory by the Filipinos over Malaysia last Friday.

Realistic chance

The Thais, the only team with a realistic chance to dethrone the Filipinos after beating them in the Asian Games last year, take a rest Thursday while the defending champions meet the Indonesians in a bid to forge a winner-take-all showdown with the hosts on Friday.

Plucky Perez plucks first diving gold

SHEILA Mae Perez performs during the women's 3-meter springboard diving final at the Aquatic Center in Nakhon Ratchasima. The defending champion Perez blew the field out of the water with an impressive 10-point victory. REUTERS

By Musong R. Castillo

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—SHEILA MAE PEREZ, THE Philippines' diving treasure, ruled the women's 3-meter springboard at the 24th Southeast Asian Games here with ease.

Perez occupied top spot right after her first dive, staying there until the end to score a total of 316.60 points and win her fourth SEAG gold medal.

The 20-year-old from Davao, who has been handled by a Chinese coach since October, dove virtually unchallenged all day, repeating as champion by close to 10 points over Mun Yee Leong of Malaysia, the Asian Games bronze medalist who could only total 306.90.

"She is very confident coming over here," swimming association president Mark Joseph said after the first day of competition at His Majesty the King's 80th Birth Anniversary complex here.

Thanh Tra Hoang was third with a 300.80, while Dhayna Lemay, the second Filipina in the nine-strong field, was eighth with 223.65 points.

Perez, who is seeking a possible stint in next year's Beijing Olympics, will also gun for golden repeats in the 1m springboard and women's 3m synchronized springboard events in the last two days of the diving competition.

Ceseil Domenios teamed up with Perez for the synchronized gold in the 2005 Games.

Actually, Perez will leave for Xian, China, after the Games to train for her stint in a diving Grand Prix in Beijing, which will be the final qualifier for the Summer Games.

Perez was the only one in Wednesday's field to get a score of as high as 8.5 in almost all of her dives.

BECAUSE he lost to Danai Udomchoke in the team event, Cecil Mamiit (above) goes into the final against the Thai ace the underdog. RAFFY LERMA

Mamiit sews up titanic clash with Udomchoke

By Musong R. Castillo

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—CECIL MAMIIT wanted payback against the man who snatched the gold medal off the Filipinos' necks in the team event. Thai ace Danai Udomchoke wanted revenge for a loss a little farther back in time.

They both earned a shot at their wishes on Wednesday, forging a titanic singles duel for the gold at the 24th Southeast Asian Games at His Majesty the King's 80th Anniversary courts here.

Mamiit, the Filipino hotshot, booked a slot in the finals after easily dismissing Nysan Tan of Cambodia, 6-0, 6-2, in the semifinals.

Mamiit will be gunning to defend the crown he won in Manila, a victory Udomchoke hasn't forgotten. The Thai superstar was on the other end of the court when Mamiit danced his way to the gold in 2005.

Udomchoke, who said that winning the gold here would be sweeter if he did so at the expense of Mamiit, trashed Indonesia's Elbert Sia, 6-4, 6-0.

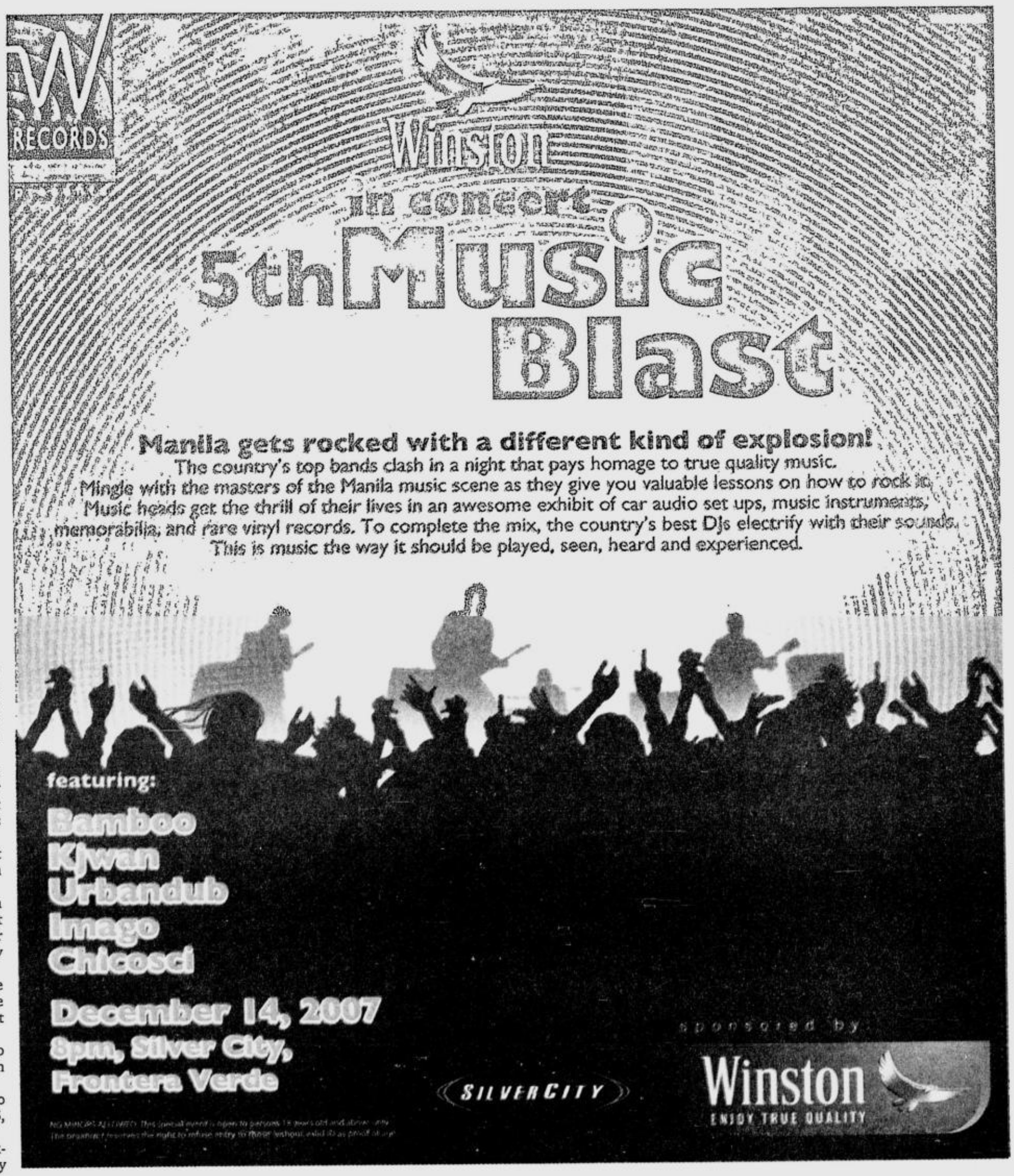
The 33-year-old Mamiit had earlier lost to Udomchoke here, 6-4, 6-4, during the team competitions eventually ruled by Thailand.

And to avenge that loss, Mamiit will have to play a lot harder than he did in Manila in 2005, when he won in straight sets.

Thailand has been pushing Udomchoke extra hard with the country's sports authority even putting up a professional tournament in Bangkok a week before the start of the Games to get its man in tip-top shape.

Mamiit's partnership with Denise Dy, meanwhile, barged into the semifinals of the mixed doubles event after a 6-3, 7-5 plastering Malaysia's Adam Jaya and Jawairiah Noordin.

Eric Taino-Diane Matias also moved into the Final Four and could make it an all-Filipino clash for the gold after a marathon 6-2, 4-6, 10-8 victory over the Indonesian pair of Suwandi Suwandi and Angelique Widjaya.



Government Warning:
Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health.

THE Philippine swim team's fantastic four: (from left) Daniel Coakley, James Walsh, Miguel Molina and Ryan Arabejo. RAFFY LERMA

Joseph reveals swim team's secrets

By Marc Anthony Reyes

AQUATICS CHIEF MARK JOSEPH YESTERday bared the secrets of the country's tankers who fished eight gold medals from the swimming pools in the Southeast Asian Games, their best effort in 16 years.

First, he said, was a solid program. And then, he added, there was that "family" atmosphere within the team.

Joseph and fellow Olympians Pinky Brosas, Ral Rosario and Akiko Thomson assumed power in the Philippine Amateur Swimming Association four years ago, amid a turbulent power struggle and immediately started implementing drastic actions to improve the sport.

"What this SEAG should make apparent to the swimming community in the Philippines is that we have a program," said Joseph in a text message from Thailand, where the country's divers are still seeing action.

He said there is now "a clear pathway for swimmers to get to the United States for training, and a few will be like Miguel (Molina), Ryan (Arabejo) and Daniel (Coakley)."

Molina won three individual golds (400m and 200m individual medley and 200m breaststroke), while Arabejo garnered two (200m freestyle and 1,500m free). Coakley clinched the 50m free via a new SEAG record, while JB Walsh snared the 200m butterfly. Together they nailed the 400m IM relay.

It was the best RP performance since the 10-gold output of Eric Buhain-led squad in the 1991 SEA Games in Manila. It also well surpassed the three-gold haul of the country in the 2005 Philippine edition.

"Our team and the coaches and all parents were helping one another just like one family," he said. "This is a new phenomenon for swimming, it may sound simplistic but it's the truth."

Thais too good for RP, scoop six boxing golds

By Recah Trinidad

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—FLYweight Annie Albania demolished Thailand's Hansa Kadeewong with a thunderous right cross to score a stoppage in the first round but her lone gold medal victory for RP failed to taint the clear superiority established by the hosts over their Filipino rivals at the start of the two-day boxing finals yesterday.

The RP women's team, which won four gold medals to power RP to the boxing championship in the 2003 Southeast Asian Games, was overpowered by a younger but determined Thai team that grabbed a total of six gold medals against only one by the Philippines.

There were small discrepancies in scoring as boxers from both countries squared off in a total of six gold-medal bouts but, on the whole, Thailand prevailed pulling away because it fielded the better fighters.

Light flyweight Alice Kate Aparri was clearly outboxed by Sopida Satumrum, 18-6, light bantam Anna Lisa Cruz was no match against the tall, sharp Usanakorn Thawinsuwanawang, 18-8 and bantam Jouveliet Chilem was outslugged by Tasamalee Thongjaan, 17-12, before the final two bouts of the Thai-RP showdown emphasized the hosts' superiority.

ALBANIA RAFFY LERMA

Featherweight Ronijen Sofla was shut out by Peamwilai Laofeam, 19-0, while defending lightweight champion Mitchel Martinez, favored against her 17-year-old opponent, faded rapidly and was outpunched, 21-11, by Sumitra Ngoksungnoem.

A dejected Manny Lopez, president of the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines, protested the manner his women fighters had lost to the hosts.

"The honor of the country should prevail above everything, they should not dishonor us by giving us one-sided decisions," Lopez told NBN-4 boxing commentator Ron de los Reyes after the fights at the Mauenpug Municipal Gymnasium.

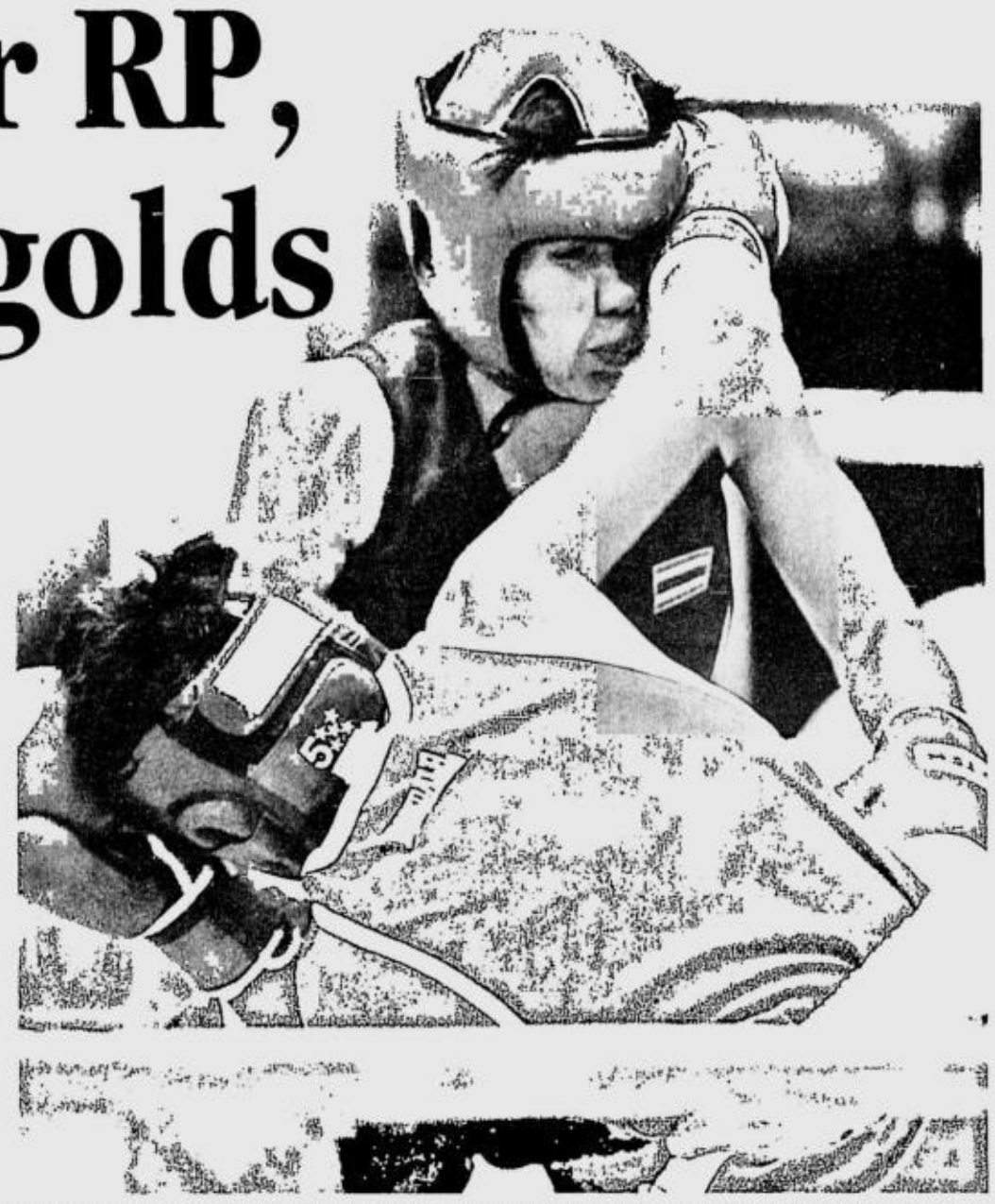
"I would not be part of this comic show in Thailand," Lopez added.

The Thais claimed a sixth gold when pinweight Duanatha Ngamlam defeated her Vietnamese foe.

The closing round in boxing will be held today with all seven Filipino fighters figuring in gold-medal bouts against Thai rivals.

RP, which won a total of eight gold medals—four each by the women and men's team—in the 2003 SEA Games championship in Bacolod City, will need to sweep the remaining bouts against awesome Thai foes to have a shot at the boxing championship.

Based on the make-up of the RP and Thai squads, Filipino boxing officials here may have to invent a better alibi for the expected results.



SALVATION for the Philippine team comes via a rocking right cross from Annie Albania that sends Thai foe Hansa Kadeewong to the floor. RAFFY LERMA

'Toothless' Alcano bares bite, rules 8-ball final

By Musong R. Castillo

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—RONNIE ALCANO broke out of a tight match with longshot Choon Kiat Tey of Singapore on Wednesday to post a 9-6 victory and bag the 8-ball men's singles gold medal in the 24th Southeast Asian Games at the Sima Thani Hall here.

The toothless Alcano, the reigning world 8-ball champion, wriggled out of a 6-6 score and won the final three racks of the alternate-break match to gift the Philippines with its second gold in billiards counting Rubilen Amit's 9-ball victory over the weekend.

It was actually the second tough match that the 35-year-old Alcano had to win after he scraped past World Pool Championship veteran Ibrahim Bin Amir of Malaysia, 9-8, in the Final Four late Tuesday night.

Bin Amir won the bronze after a 9-0 victory over Dachawat Poomjang of Thailand, Tey's semifinal victim, in the consolation match.

RONNIE Alcano completes his billiards mission, plunking the 8-ball gold medal into the Philippine coffers. RAFFY LERMA

Alcano thus won his third gold medal in two editions of the Games after winning the 15-ball rotation and the 15-ball doubles with Leonardo Andam in the Philippines in 2005.

Lee Van Corteza and Antonio Gabica, meanwhile, will carry the fight for the Philippines when 9-ball men's singles action starts Thursday also at the Sima Thani Hall.

Corteza, who got booted out by countryman Jeffrey de Luna in the first round of the KO stage of the 2007 WPD last month, debuts against Brunei's Crown Prince Al-Muhtadee, while Gabica slugs it out with Ibrahim in race-to-9 matches.

In related news, Angelina Magdalena Ticoalu, the Indonesian whom Amit beat to repeat as 9-ball champion, won the 8-ball singles also late Tuesday at the expense of Santhinee Jaisiekul.

Thai Jaisiekul had shown Amit the door with a 7-6 semifinal victory that prevented the Filipino from scoring another golden double here.

Tanpinco, RP ladies slip to 2nd; RP men concede fight

By Musong R. Castillo

BONANZA RANCH KHAOYAI, THAIland—Anya Tanpinco fired a one-under-par 71, her second sub-par round, but fell to second in individual play like her ladies squad with just a round left at the 24th Southeast Asian Games golf competition here.

Another 220, meanwhile, kept the Philippines in fourth spot in the men's team championship as Thailand left the field fighting for the crumbs at the long Bonanza Golf and Country Club layout here.

Tanpinco and Chihiro Ikeda, who submitted a 75, pooled 146 for the day and 289 after 36 holes as the Filipino ladies, the leader by one shot in the first round, dropped to second spot, three behind new pacesetter Thailand.

Regina de Guzman failed to count for the second straight day with another 77.

Tanpinco yielded the individual lead to Thai P. Khongkraphan, who shot a tournament-best 69 for 140. She stood one shot ahead of the Filipino, a member of the silver medal-winning team in the 2005 Manila Games who opened up with a 70 on Tuesday.

Anthony Fernando turned in a level 72 and Ferdinand Aunzo and Mark Fernando both fired 74s as the Filipinos virtually ended their bid for the gold medal.

All four of Thailand's players shot under-par rounds for 208 as Pipatpong Naewsuk and T. Khrongpha submitted 69s and either of the 70s of K. Aphibarmrat and Varut Chomchalam capped team scoring for the day.

The Thais built up a whopping 16-stroke lead over second-running Malaysia, which drew a 71 from A.M. Nazari and 74s from Edmund Au and Amli Mohayadeen for 218 and 646 overall, one up on Indonesia and three ahead of the Filipinos.

Skipper Caloy Coscoluella has already conceded the gold to Thailand, but vowed to at least snare the silver on the final day Thursday.

"*Patay na tayo sa ginto* (we've lost the gold)," Coscoluella said as he noted how the Thais have out-driven the Filipinos here. "This course, though not that difficult, served them (Thais) well because they are all long."

The Thais are out-driving the Filipinos by at least 25 yards, and this disparity is evident when they play their second shots into par-5 greens. The Filipinos use 3-woods and fall short while the Thais would putt for eagles after long-iron shots.

Business is brewing in Thailand

IN HUDDLE

Beth Celis

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—EXCEPT for a very few, the Filipinos who booked into the Sabai Hotel are well known in Manila's basketball circles.

PBL commissioner Chino Trinidad, his newly appointed special adviser Joe Lipa, SBP executive director Pato Gregorio, RP team patron Mikee Romero of Harbour Centre and his trusted lieutenant Erick Arejola, coaches Junel Baculi, Louie Alas, Lawrence Chongson, team managers Bernard Yang of Hapee and Baby Oben of Toyota Otis, to name a few, are billeted in the hotel together with members of the Philippine media.

Former La Salle cager BJ Manalo also booked here with his wife and one-year-old baby girl. BJ said he's in Thailand as part of an international religious group that is into sports.

For Pato, who came with his parents, the SEA Games is also a trip down memory lane. Pato's mother worked in Thailand many years ago as a United Nations staff member and she had brought her family with her. Pato was then only a young boy.

Sabai is a three-star accommodation, considered top of the line in this remote area, where life is painfully slow and laid-back, as Baby Oben puts it. So laid-back indeed that my friend Rhea Navarro of Shakey's V-League wanted to turn back as soon as we arrived here that lifeless Saturday at dusk, after four hours of land travel from Bangkok.

Rhea only changed her mind when familiar faces started trickling in from various SEA Games venues later in the evening.

* * *

One unfamiliar face that joined the basketball delegation here is that of Paul Monozca, a Filipino who has been based in Singapore for 15 years.

Someone whispered to me that Paul is known as an international deal maker and wherever he is, there's bound to be a big business transaction.

"He deals only with the wealthiest and the best in a particular country," my informer told me.

Naturally, I got very curious.

What is this guy doing with the Pinoy group in Ratchasima. Who is he with? Is there a big business transaction going on?

I took one good look at the "Dealmaker" one morning. He was dressed in a loose round-necked T-shirt, walking shorts and wore rubber shoes. He was tall, mestizo and probably in his late 30s.

I wondered whether this man could indeed make another person or group richer by billions that quick.

* * *

Not by design, I got to meet the mysterious stranger on my second day in Nakhon Ratchasima, also known as Khorat.

He told me he had been invited by a man he foresees to be in the Forbes List of 50 wealthiest people in the Philippines in two or three years. En route to Khorat, he and this young Filipino businessman stopped over in Bangkok to meet with biggies of Pricewaterhouse Coopers where he works.

This Filipino businessman is well on his way to becoming the Philippines' biggest iron ore magnate, Monozca informed me.

* * *

Although I didn't get here on time to catch RP Harbour Centre's first match against Cambodia, my colleagues said I didn't miss anything.

The game was so lopsided, they said, that an official of the RP delegation snored his way to Dreamland during the court massacre.

RP-Harbour Centre faced Malaysia while I wrote this on Wednesday.

Many consider the game against Indonesia, which we beat by 26 points, as the championship match.

Indonesia earlier beat dark horses Malaysia and Thailand.

* * *

Over bottles of Singha beer and bowls of strange apperitifs, a group of scribes mulled the possibilities of a Philippine gold in the Olympics—if only women's boxing is an official sport.

They all agreed that women's boxing could be a real source of our first Olympic gold. And they based their observation on the performance of our female boxers here who sent six of their seven entries into the finals against Thai foes.

* * *

Speaking of beer, I informed Jon Hernandez, of San Miguel, when he called from Manila the other day, that the drinking group here has been homesick for San Mig Lights.

Could he recommend a place where the group could buy the home-brewed product?

Jon wasn't sure about San Mig Lights, but he said Phuket Beer and Blue Ice Beer, which are both available here, are manufactured by San Miguel Corp.

While Red Horse is sold in stores, Jon said other San Miguel brands can only be bought in bars.

Laos may cut hoops from SEA Games

NAKHON RATCHASIMA, THAILAND— After working hard to reclaim its basketball throne in the region, the Philippines faces the prospects of not being able to defend its crown in the next Southeast Asian Games.

Basketball and gymnastics are in doubt for the next edition of the SEA Games after 2009 host Laos confirmed Wednesday that it cannot stage the events.

Laos sporting officials said its host city, the capital Vientiane, did not have adequate facilities to hold the events, which are staples of most multisports games.

"There will be no gymnastics and basketball during the 25th SEA Games," Laos team commissioner Somphu Pangsa said. "There are no huge venues for indoor sports like these."

Pangsa said Laos intended to cut the number of sports from 43 in the current games to 25, but would not reveal which other sports were to be excluded.

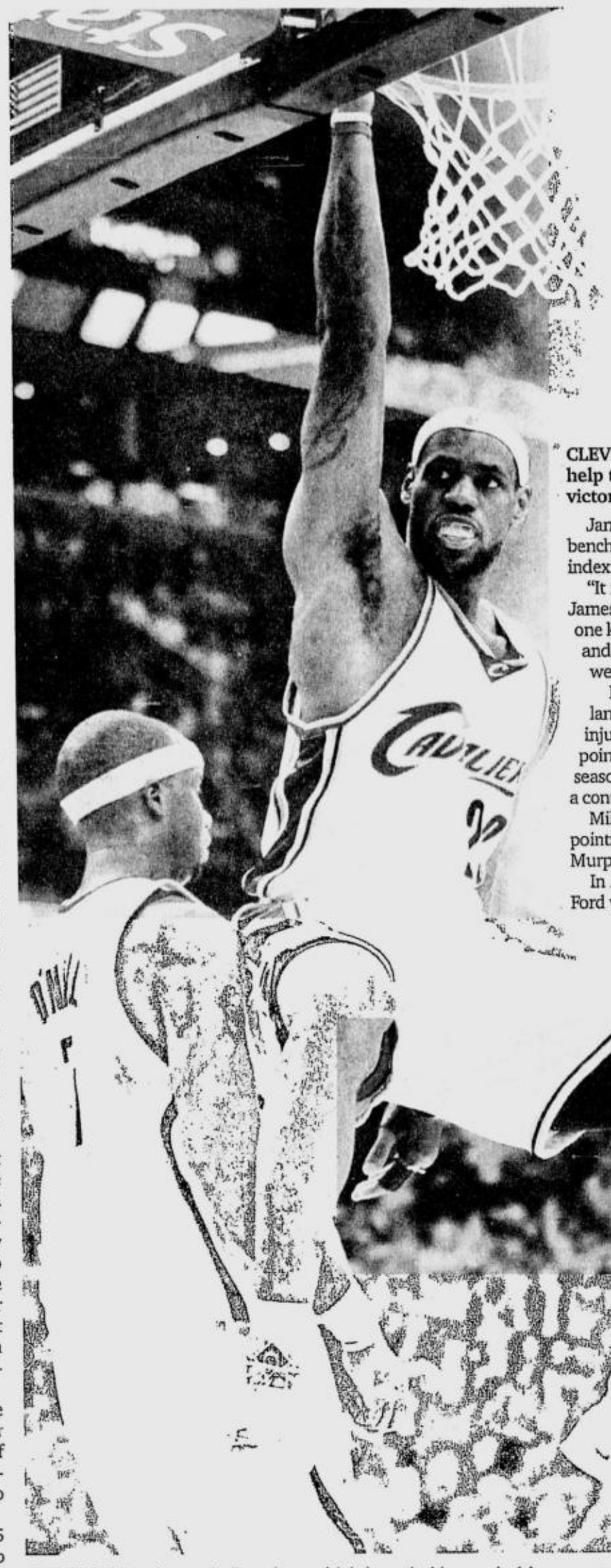
Core sports such as athletics, swimming and soccer must be retained.

Thailand officials have thrown gymnastics and basketball a lifeline, saying they are prepared to concurrently host the gymnastics in cities neighboring the Laos border, such as Nongkhai, Ubon Ratchathani, or Udon Thani.

"We were informed by the Southeast Asian Gymnastics Confederation that there will be no gymnastics in the 25th SEA Games in Laos, so the president of the Thailand Gymnastics Association is currently negotiating with the Laos sport minister to host the gymnastics on Thai soil at the same time as the games in Laos, and the winner will receive the SEA Games medal like it was being played in Laos," Sarayuth Phanasak, secretary of Thailand's Gymnastic Association, said.

"We have seen that SEA Games is the chance for developing gymnastic sport for athletes in Southeast Asian nations, and if we don't have these kind of sports the gymnasts in this region will lose their chance to develop."

Basketball was scrapped from the 2005 edition in Manila because of a leadership controversy involving the Philippines' national federation. *AP*



CLEVELAND main man LeBron James (right) sparks his squad with his return, leading the Cavaliers past the Pacers. REUTERS

LeBron back as Cavs score

Ford falls hard on floor as Raptors trip Hawks

CLEVELAND—LEBRON JAMES RETURNED FROM INJURY TO SCORE 17 POINTS AND help the Cleveland Cavaliers end a six-game losing streak on Tuesday with a 118-105 victory over the Indiana Pacers.

James, who played 22 minutes off the bench, missed five games with a sprained left index finger. Cleveland lost all five games.

"It felt like we were in a good groove," said James, who wore a protective glove. "Everyone knows each other. We know what we like and dislike, so it felt like it did last year when we were playing our best basketball."

Larry Hughes also came off the Cleveland bench in his second game back after injury and recorded a season-high 36 points, while Anderson Varejao made his season debut, also off the bench, after ending a contract holdout.

Mike Dunleavy led the Pacers with 23 points while Jermaine O'Neil had 18 and Troy Murphy posted 14 points and 12 rebounds.

In Atlanta, Toronto Raptors point guard TJ Ford was taken off the court on a stretcher following a scary fall late in a 100-88 victory over the Atlanta Hawks on Tuesday.

Ford, who missed the 2004-05 season with Milwaukee following neck surgery, stole the ball and was headed toward a breakaway basket when Atlanta rookie Al Horford hit his face with his hand. Ford landed hard on his back, his head bouncing off the floor.

Raptors spokesman Jim LaBumbard confirmed Ford "had feeling in his upper and lower extremities when he was taken off the floor."

Ford, who scored 26 points, was taken to Piedmont Hospital.

In Washington, Antawn Jamison had 22 points and 13 rebounds and Caron Butler added 20 points and 10 rebounds as the Wizards overcame a career-high 36 points from Craig Smith to clobber the Minnesota Timberwolves, 102-88.

In East Rutherford, New Jersey, Chris Kaman and Tim Thomas both scored 18 points to lead the Los Angeles Clippers past the Nets, 91-82, for their first win in New Jersey in nearly 10 years.

New Jersey lost for the eighth time in its last nine home games.

Richard Jefferson led New Jersey with 21 points but was 6-for-21 from the field. New Jersey shot 32 percent (26-for-81), including 5-for-25 in the fourth quarter.

The Clippers' last win at New Jersey came in January 1998, a span of eight games.

In Memphis, Tennessee, Chauncey Billups had 28 points and 14 assists, while Richard Hamilton scored 27 points for the Detroit Pistons, who caged the Grizzlies, 113-103.

Tayshaun Prince scored 19 points and Jason Maxiell finished with 15 points, missing only one of eight shots from the field as the Pistons won their seventh game in the last eight.

Rudy Gay led Memphis with 20 points, 16 in the second half, while Pau Gasol and Kyle Lowry both had 18 points.

In Chicago, Ben Gordon scored 27 points and Luol Deng added 20 for the Bulls, who routed the Seattle SuperSonics, 123-96, for their most lopsided victory of the season.

The league's worst shooting team, Chicago, converted 53.7 percent of its field goals. The Bulls led 67-49 at halftime after outscoring Seattle by 14 in the second quarter and never let up.

In Salt Lake City, Martell Webster scored 25 points and the Portland Trail Blazers won on the road for just the second time this season, clipping the Utah Jazz, 97-89.

In Oakland, California, Baron Davis had 18 points, six rebounds and six assists as the Golden State Warriors took advantage of Tim Duncan sitting out another game to beat the San Antonio Spurs, 96-84.

Stephen Jackson had 20 points, five assists and five boards and Matt Barnes added 16 points and eight rebounds as the Warriors used a big second quarter to snap the Spurs' five-game winning streak. *Reuters, AP*

What's in a name? Bitbit's is worth the bronze

NAKHON RATCHASIMA, THAILAND— During most tense sporting events you expect to see coaches chewing some gum or their fingernails, but Myanmar's tennis coach has chosen an exotic alternative for this Southeast Asian Games.

Aung Moe favors the betelnut, and because it's banned from sale in Thailand, he has been forced to bring a supply from home.

The betelnut is the seed of the Betel palm and acts as a stimulant when chewed. It was banned in Thailand not because of its effect on chewers but because the bright red spittle it produces leaves stains.

Myanmar's 46-year-old coach can regularly be seen dashing from his seat to the restrooms during matches to dispose of his red residue thoughtfully.

* * *

Laos' two petanque gold medalists have become instant millionaires—in Laotian kips that is.

Saengpon Polamad, the chief commissioner of Laos athletes, said each Southeast Asian Games gold medalist from the nation will receive 20 million kips (about $1,800), with silver medalists receiving half that, and bronze about half that again.

Petanque—a form of boules most readily associated with elderly participants in France—has a presence in Southeast Asia due to the former French colonization of the region and has delivered Laos two rare gold medals at this games.

* * *

Myanmar may not be a threat in many events at this Southeast Asian Games, but when it comes to memorably named athletes, it must claim gold and silver.

Filipino cyclist Baby Marites Bitbit comes close but is in the bronze medal position.

Just as she was in the women's marathon and 10,000 meters, Myanmar's barefoot runner Pa Pa is a close runner-up.

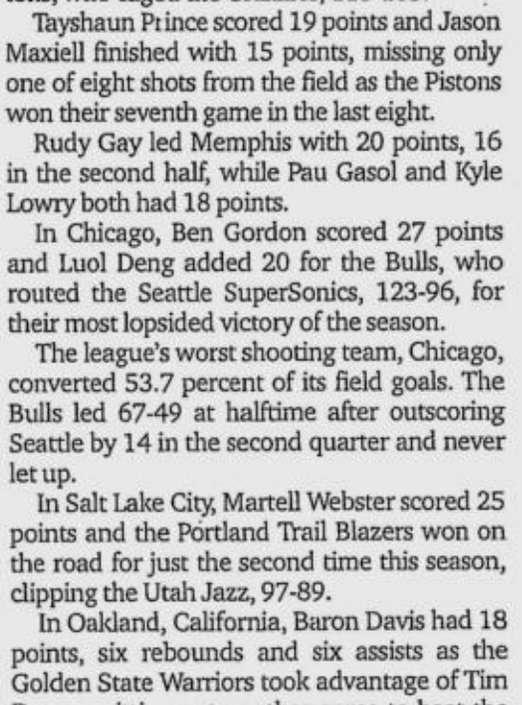
And gold? It must surely go to Myanmar's wushu competitor Honey Ko Ko.

* * *

Organizers have handed out more than 100,000 condoms to athletes and fans during this Games.

Samrerng Yaengkratoke, chief of the provincial health office, said the free condoms were part of the Sports Fight Against AIDS program.

Dozens of volunteer motorcycle taxis with bags full of condoms have been roaming the city. *AP*



HOLMES: I feel good about myself. AP

'Hall' is now Holmes' home

CANASTOTA, NEW YORK—HE HAD A BOXing resume that could stand beside the greatest in his sport. Yet Larry Holmes always seemed to have to justify himself as a champion.

There was no need for explanations Tuesday.

Holmes received the ultimate validation when he took his place in the International Boxing Hall of Fame. Joining him in the 2008 class were 11 others boxers and ring personalities chosen by members of the Boxing Writers Association of America and a panel of international boxing historians.

He will be enshrined as the longest reigning world heavyweight champion in boxing history, holding the title for nearly seven years (1978-85). Holmes' 20 successful heavyweight title defenses were surpassed by only Joe Louis with 25. He was on the verge of matching Rocky Marciano's perfect 49-0 mark when he was upset by Michael Spinks for his first loss.

"I think there were some people who shortchanged me," Holmes said by telephone. "Sometimes the critics try to make you think you are less than what you are."

Holmes will be inducted June 8. *AP*

Woods' 2007 a throwback to his best golf year

THOUSAND OAKS, CALIFORNIA— Tiger Woods rates his 2007 season almost on a par with his performance in 2000, which is widely regarded as one of the best years in golfing history.

The American world No. 1 racked up seven victories on the 2007 PGA Tour, including his 13th major title at the PGA Championship in August.

He also enjoyed a golden campaign in 2000, winning the last three majors of the season along with eight other tournaments worldwide.

"I think this year was very close to doing that," Woods told a news conference on Tuesday during preparations for this week's Target World Challenge. "I was just four shots away.

"I had a great chance to win three of the four majors this year. I finished second in two of them and was just a few shots away from basically doing what I did in 2000.

TIGER Woods collects his third straight Player of the Year award. AP

"If I got those done, people would probably be comparing it (this season) to 2000, if not better."

Woods, named PGA Tour Player of the Year on Tuesday for the ninth time, tied for second at the Masters before again finishing runner-up at the US Open.

"I didn't capitalize on my opportunities, like at Augusta I did not finish the last two holes well," he said, referring to Augusta National, the permanent venue for the Masters.

"I bogeyed 17 and 18 both Friday and Saturday. You can't do that and expect to win a major championship."

Woods triumphed four times in his last five starts on the 2007 PGA Tour, a red-hot run he rates equal to any he has produced in terms of ball-striking and consistency.

"There's no doubt it was right up there," the 31-year-old said. "I really felt like I had control of the golf ball.

"Granted, I did have some bad days in there but I managed to shoot 70 or 69 on those bad days through course management or proper misses. I didn't shoot myself out of any event."

Woods was delighted to earn the PGA Tour honor for the third consecutive season, and ninth time in the last 11 years.

"It's been a great year overall and to get the wins and the respect of your peers, that's always what you want to have happen," he said. *Reuters*

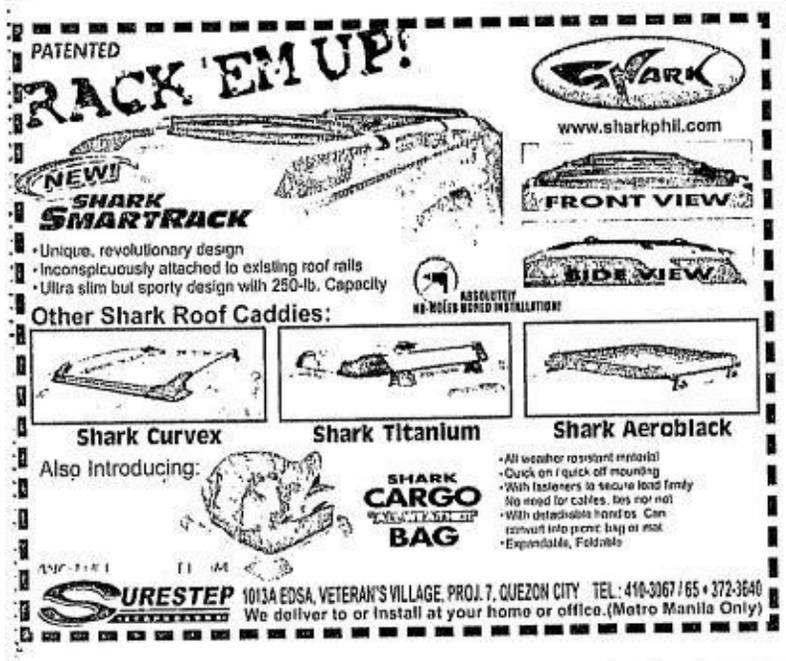
SPORTS

Southwoods Chairman's Cup stakes P3M in prizes

PRIZES WORTH ABOUT P3 million will be given away in the Chairman's Cup 2007 golf tournament tomorrow and Saturday at the Masters and Legends courses of the Manila Southwoods Golf and Country Club in Carmona, Cavite.

Three major prizes—a Mitsubishi Lancer GLX, a week-long Alaska cruise for two via Royal Carribean and Korean Airlines, an El Nido vacation package, a Coca-Cola golfing vacation in China and an SYM Motorbike Bonus 100—will first be staked as hole-in-one rewards but will be raffled off if not won. A Texas Eagle cart will be another prize for an ace.

More than 400 members of the clubs have already signed up for the tourney held in honor of Southwoods chair of the board Robert John Sobrepena.

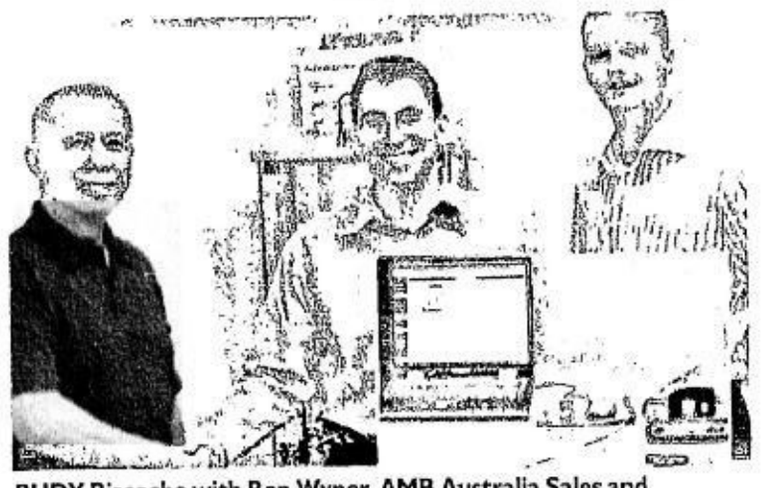


Foot races go high-tech

STARTING NEXT YEAR, LOcal marathons and other races will be up to par with the New York City Marathon, the Tour de France and event the Olympics. At least, as far as the accuracy of the timing system is concerned.

To upgrade the quality of races in the country, veteran marathon organizer Rudy Biscocho recently acquired the state of the art AMB ChipX Timing System, specially developed for timing and scoring active sports events such as running, cycling, ice skating and triathlons.

Other international events using the ChipX are the Tour de Pologne 2007 in Poland, the Hamburg Triathlon World Championships 2007, the European MTB Championships and the South African Ironman, the UCI World BMX Championships, Tour de France, the Olympics and the Hong Kong Cycling Association.



RUDY Biscocho with Ben Wyner, AMB Australia Sales and Marketing Manager, upon his purchase of the AMB Timing System (inset) in Australia. With them is David Dowling of AMB Asia.

Under the AMB system, each athlete is fitted with a chip which outputs a signal. As the athlete crosses the start/finish line, the signal is detected and the exact time calculated.

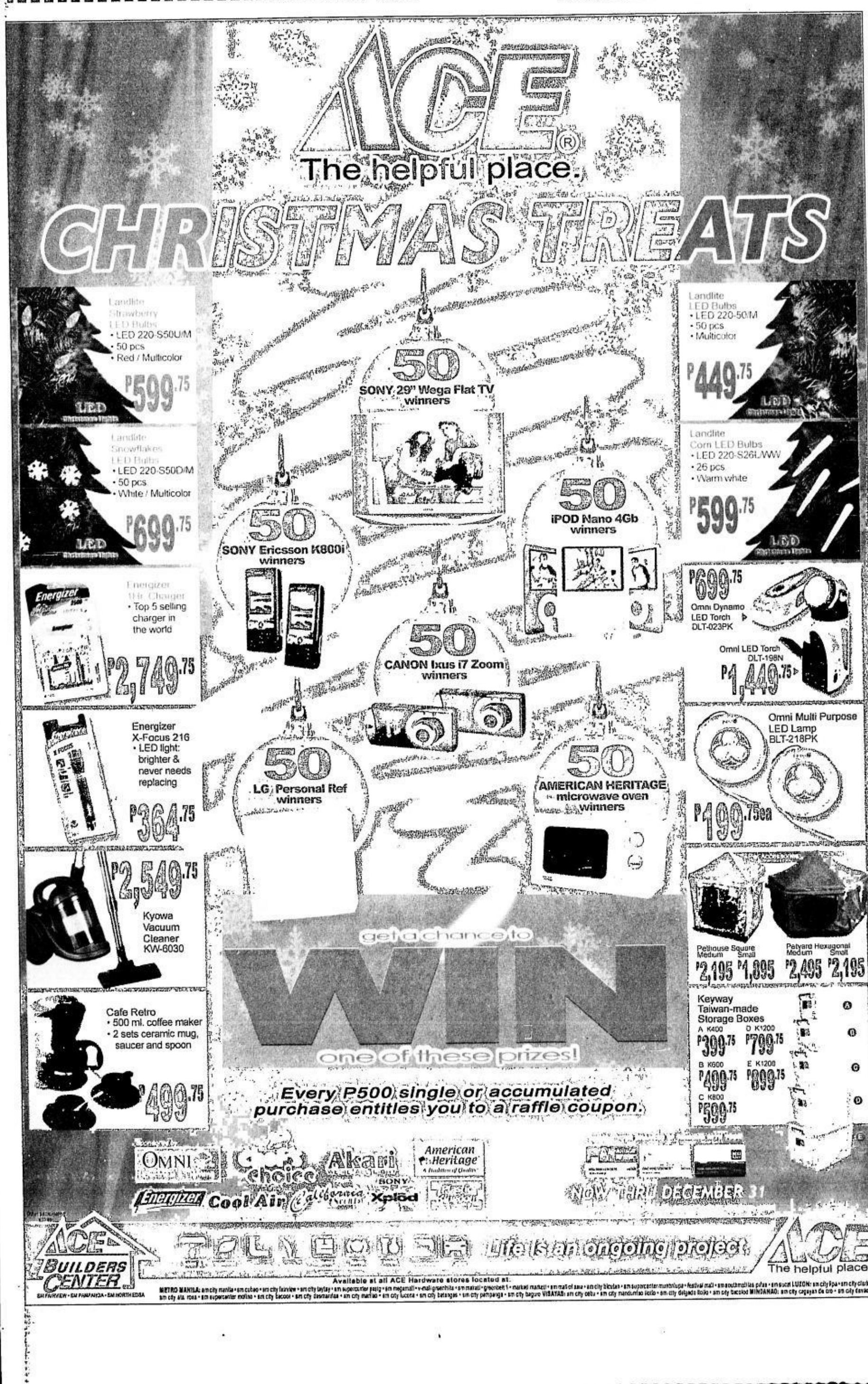
According to Biscocho, the system will now be used in all his running events like the National Milo Marathon, Adidas King of the Road, Avon foot race, Yakult 10 Miler, Global City Run, ABS-CBN DZMM Takbo Para sa Kalikasan, WRR Run for Life, the Clark Free Port International Marathon slated Jan. 13, 2008 and the Condura Run in March, 2008. *Marlon Bernardino*

Age-group tennis set

THE PHILIPPINE TENNIS Association will hold the Philta-Dr. Pablo Olivarez Age-Group Tennis Championships on Dec. 18-22 at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

Events on tap are singles competitions in the boys' and girls' 18 years and under, 16 and under, 14 and under and 12 and under and the unisex 10 years and under.

Registration for the tournament, a Group 3 Philta event, is going on and deadline for submission of entries is at noon on Saturday. Draw will follow at 2 p.m. to be conducted by tournament referee Godfrey Callao. Entry fee is 300 per category.



SPORTSWATCH

San Carlos bets dominate FBL Visayas edition

UNIVERSITY OF SAN CARLOS EMERGED THE dominant school in the recent Visayas edition of the Futures Basketball League (FBL), winning two out of three divisions contested in the finals held at the Don Bosco Technical College covered courts.

The juniors division saw USC-North team, led by its pair of MVP's Kim Jordan Nuneza and Milton Otida, dispose of Don Bosco Technical College, 72-58, in a highly physical game. Earlier, USC-North defeated Sacred heart School-Jesus while Don Bosco upset highly favored University of Southern Philippines in their semis matches.

In the midgets boys' division of the tournament, it was even an all-USC affair as the school's North and South teams met for the championship with the reigning titlist South team, led by Ian Ortega and Bradley Bacaltos , best its sister team, 45-37, to take the crown.

FiliCity hosts mountain bike

BIDDING TO MAKE ENDURANCE RACING CLOSer to the people, Sabak Sports and Adventure has teamed up with FiliCity (Filinvest Corporate City) to come up with 9 to 9: The 1st FiliCity 12 Hour Mountain Bike Endurance Race.

To be held at FiliCity grounds in Alabang on Dec. 15, the event is open to riders of all ages and genders. Categories include Mens Team, Womens Team, Mixed Team and Solo. Team entries must be comprised of three riders only, each of whom must complete a minimum number of laps in order to be considered a finisher.

The endurance race is just the first in what Sabak Sports and FiliCity envision to be an ongoing series of events designed to attract more people to the sport. For details, call 8503516.

UGBA champ known today

EIGHTY CHAMPIONSHIP FIGHTS WILL BE FEAtured in the finals of the 632-entry UGBA Heritage Cup National 9-stag derby starting at 2 p.m. today at the Araneta Coliseum.

The grand champion will receive a staggering prize of P6 million from the total purse of P10.15 million, according to Rene Diaz, president of United Gamecock Breeders Association (UGBA).

Raul Adan of LGBA leads with eight wins and one loss but *sabong* idol Patrick Antonio of Team Sagupaan, Charlie Yu and Jimmy Canda of Salpukan Davao and Nestor Vendevil of Nueva Ecija have six points with three more fights left.

'Noche Buena' derby up

ROLIGON MEGA COCKPIT'S ANNUAL *NOCHE Buena* 4-cock derby sizzles on Dec. 27 with P500,000 in guaranteed prize for the winners.

Host Rolly Ligon said entry fee is P6,600.

"The one day format will allow participants, specially those from the provinces, to save precious time and resources," said Ligon.

Meanwhile, the No Entry Fee Fastest Win One–Ulutan" sizzles at Roligon tomorrow and on Saturday, with P100,000 up for grabs. For details, call 8512275, 8529812 and 8331638.

RACING TIPS
BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Strong Friend (3), Calvin's Fury (4), Terrible Friend (1), White Diamond (2)
Race 2—(Qrt/Tri)—Kate Alex (8), Fair Urduja (3), China Woman (4), Detective Daryll (1)
Race 3—(Qrt/Tri)—Flame Of The Friend (4), Royal Lady Wind (5), Magic Street/Style Icon (6), Oliva Tan (1)
Race 4—(Qrt/Tri)—Erica's Talent (2), Speed Admiral (7), Lord Brian (5), Dow Jones (6)
Race 5—(Qrt/Tri)—Tata Ra/On The Fairway (5), Black Magic/Elegancia (3), Spin Cycle (6), Unfolding (4)
Race 6—(Qrt/Tri)—Quant Je Puis (4), Danehill (6), Magic Cue/Shades Of Red (1), Que Fresca (5)
Race 7—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Yanong Rikit (7), Hurry My Love (2), Speed Bullet (5), Spanish Drums (6)
Race 8—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Terry Toon (3), Princess Leighla (13), Iron King (2), Expiditer (6), Best In Field (7), Daog (12)

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BSP hints at new interest rate cut

Reduction seen to match US Fed's move

IN THIS ISSUE

Gaming unit eyes listing on London exchange /B2

Gov't generates P90B from asset privatization /B5

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS YESTERDAY HINTed at a further easing in monetary policy following the US Federal Reserve's 25-basis-point cut in its benchmark interest rate, bolstering market expectations that the reduction will be matched by the local central bank during its next policy rate-setting on Dec. 20.

"The Fed decision provides us elbow room in monetary policy particularly as the inflation outlook continues to be benign," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said.

"Nonetheless, this needs to be viewed together with the risks to the favorable outlook such as volatilities in international commodity and food prices as well as uncertainties in global financial markets which remain present," he added.

BSP HINTS/ B4

Peso defies regional decline, hits 41.31:$1

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO YESTERDAY climbed to a 41.31 to a dollar, defying a regional currency market downtrend caused by concerns over the "small" interest rate cut by the US Federal Reserve.

The local currency opened near the day's low of 41.54 but closed at the day's peak of 41.31, supported by the strong season of overseas Filipino remittances, currency traders said.

It gained another 9 centavos from Tuesday's 41.40 to $1. Since the start of the year, Asia's best performing currency has appreciated by nearly 19 percent against the greenback. The peso is now trading at its highest level since touching 41.28 on May 10, 2000.

On the other hand, the Indonesian rupiah, Korean won, Taiwanese dollar and Malaysian ringgit faltered against the dollar on concerns in Wall Street that the "too little, too late" US Fed interest rate cut would again revive aversion to emerging market assets.

Although the 25 basis-point cut by the US Fed had been priced in by investors, many were hoping for a more aggressive intercession to prevent a recession in the world's biggest economy, which is currently besieged by a credit crunch arising from the subprime crisis.

The subprime crisis was caused by rising delinquency among mortgage credit or housing loans given to borrowers with imperfect credit history and little equity.

At the rate that it is going, currency traders believed that the only way to temper the peso's rise would be for the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to again slash interest rates during its next policy rate setting on Dec. 20. *(See story on this page.)*

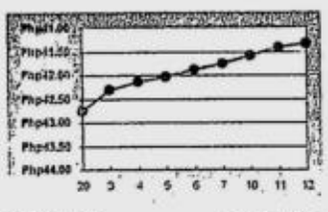
Even if the disappointing US Fed rate cut might have triggered an unwinding of the so-called yen "carry trade"—or the practice of sourcing funds from low-interest rate Japan to invest in high-yielding emerging markets, local traders said the peso was not affected as much because of the strong OFW inflows ahead of the Christmas season.

Volume traded at the Philippine Dealing System yesterday was heavier at $622.3 million against the previous day's $502 million.

The US Fed lowered on Tuesday the targeted funds rate by a quarter point to 4.25 percent, in its third rate cut in this easing cycle, but some were looking forward to a bigger reduction.

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

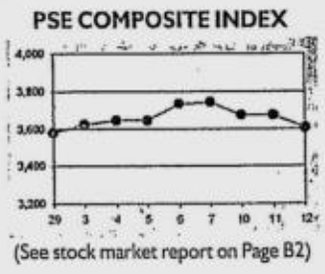
₱41.31 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Dec. 12, 2007

STOCK MARKET

Stocks end 1.8% lower

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 1.8 PERcent lower yesterday in a sell-off after a modest cut in US interest rates disappointed investors, dealers said.

Local investors took a cue from Wall Street, where the Dow Jones industrial average fell more than 2 percent on Tuesday after the Fed trimmed its benchmark rate by 25 basis points at its final meeting this year.

While the size of the cut was expected, investors were still hoping for a bigger half-point reduction to help the US economy avert a recession.

The composite index dropped 66.79 points at 3,605.59, a two-week low.

The broader all-share index fell 36.38 points to 2,207.37.

Decliners overwhelmed advancers 95 to 22, while 39 were unchanged.

A total of 3.3 billion shares worth P4.3 billion were traded.

"The Fed cut its rates, but the guys on Wall Street are not happy with the size of the cut. They think that it's not sufficient to arrest an economic slowdown," said James Lago at Westlink Global Equities.

But the Fed left the door ajar to more rate cuts, saying "incoming information suggests that economic growth is slowing, reflecting the intensification of the housing correction and some softening in business and consumer spending."

The Fed also said strains in financial markets have increased in recent weeks.

Bangko Sentral Governor Amando Tetangco welcomed the Fed's latest move, saying the rate cut and the benign inflation outlook give local policymakers "elbow room" in monetary policy. *(See related story on this page.)*

Market heavyweight Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. dropped P10 to P3,040. Conglomerate Ayala Corp. fell P20 to P565.

But San Miguel Corp.'s A-shares, restricted to local investors, surged P4.50 to P55. Its B-shares, open to foreigners, advanced P4 to P55.50.

Westlink's Lago said the rally in San Miguel shares was a "combination of technical factors and possibly some market expectations that San Miguel will submit a 'bid to win' for the power transmission assets."

"There's a play in San Miguel because it will take part in the TransCo bidding and whoever wins will certainly gain from TransCo's profitable operations," DA Market's Aguila said. *(See story on Page A1.)* *AFP*

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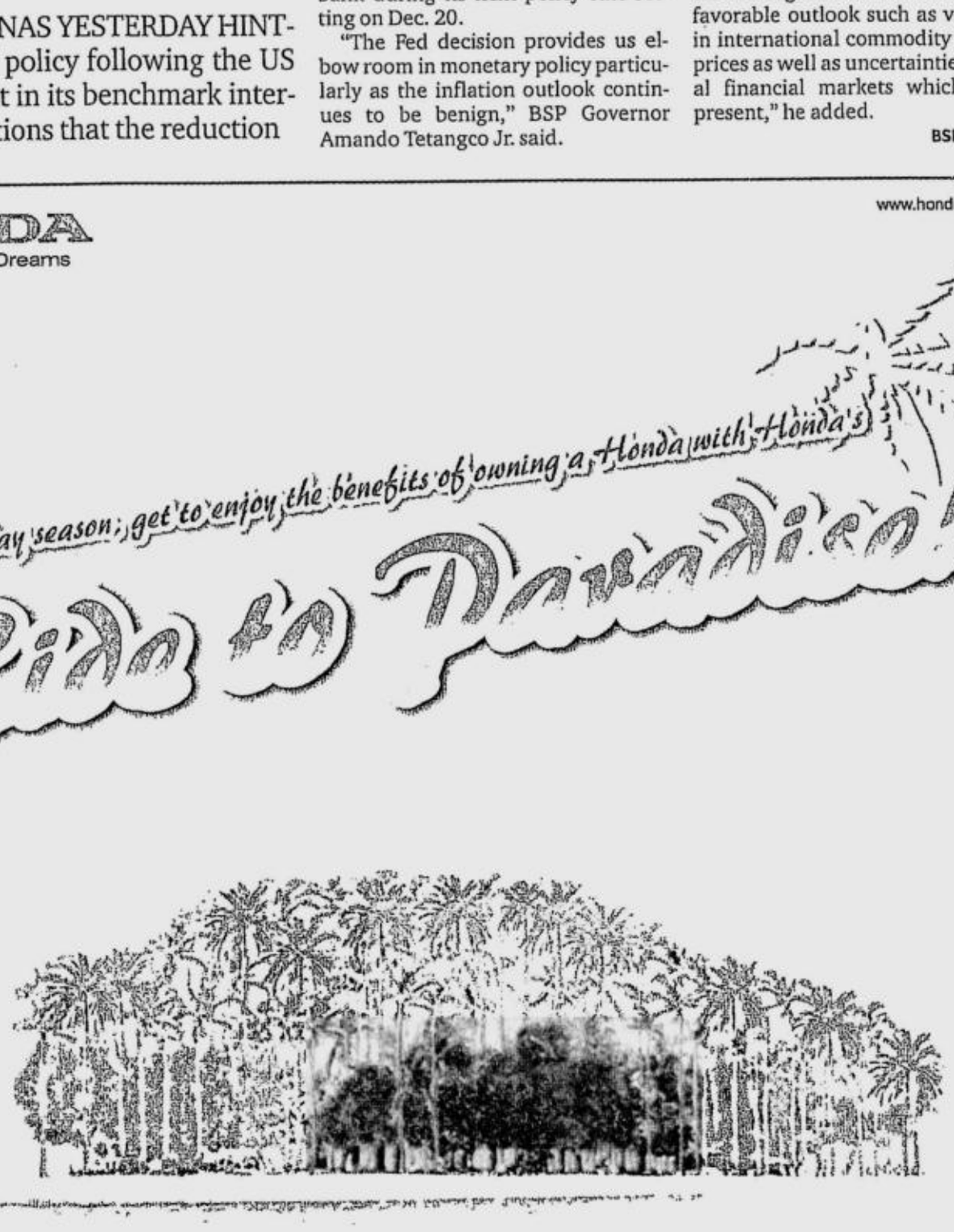

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Gaming unit eyes listing on London exchange

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

THE GAMING UNIT OF LISTED INformation technology solutions provider Diversified Financial Network Inc. (DFNN) is studying a possible listing on the London Stock Exchange or another foreign bourse to be able to raise its stake in a recently acquired gaming company.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, DFNN subsidiary Pacific Gaming Investments Pte. Ltd. (PGI) said it had an option to buy an additional 33.33 percent in Interactive Entertainment Technology Solutions (IETS) should it fulfill certain conditions, one of which was PGI's listing on either the London Stock Exchange or an alternative comparable exchange.

PGI last week said it already bought 33.33 percent of IETS for roughly $2.5 million.

IETS was incorporated on Dec. 12, 2003, to engage in the business of providing software and solutions for the gaming industry and has been granted contracts by various gaming regulators for the operation of certain gaming-related contracts. It currently has an authorized capital stock of P30 million.

IETS is a local firm with management based in Singapore, sources familiar with the deal said. It is involved in event, sports and financial spread betting and has contracts to provide equipment and software to state gaming regulator Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor).

"PGI has also begun due diligence on a number of cash flow-positive and operational slot machine arcades in Cambodia and the Philippines with the end goal of acquiring these arcades," DFNN and PGI chair Ramon Garcia Jr. said earlier.

Garcia said that wireless sports betting, particularly using mobile phones, has been growing at a phenomenal rate in Europe, while somewhat absent in the Asian market. DFNN, through PGI, will provide the gaming software expertise and marketing tie-ups in various Asian countries.

"Major mobile phone providers are at the forefront of this technological change," Garcia said, adding that in 2002, Orange, the wireless mobile phone operator in the United Kingdom, signed an agreement with ukbetting.com, an online bookmaker, to be the network's first wireless betting provider. ukbetting.com is now part of the Skybet.com.

Financial "spread betting" is another area that shows great promise for the company. So far, the biggest portion of wireless betting in the United Kingdom involves financial instruments. "Investors" can use their cell phones to wager on the movement of a stock, currency, or commodity almost anywhere in the world. Wager amounts are small, but can offer large returns.

The leading spread-betting companies, such as IG Index/IGMarkets, City Index, Cantor Index, Financial Spreads and CMC, make most of their revenues from financial markets.

Sterling Bank gets FCDU license

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPinas has approved the application of savings bank Sterling Bank of Asia to operate a foreign currency deposit unit (FCDU).

An FCDU is a unit of a local bank or of a local branch of a foreign bank authorized to engage in foreign exchange-denominated transactions, such as accepting foreign currency deposits and granting of foreign currency loans.

In a briefing yesterday, Sterling Bank executive vice president Asterio Favis said the thrift bank was also seeking a license from the BSP to engage in trust operations as well as a separate accreditation from the Securities and Exchange Commission to be a government securities dealer.

At present, the bank can trade government securities but is not allowed to distribute these fixed-income assets.

Since the start of Sterling Bank's operations last March, the bank's resources have expanded sharply to P3.5 billion from only P500 million, he noted.

With an FCDU license, Favis said the bank could start investing in the government's foreign currency bonds or ROPs to match foreign currency deposits.

"ROPs will likely be the bread and butter of our FCDU," he said.

Despite the sharp appreciation of the peso against the dollar, Favis said there would still be people or companies with FCDU requirements, including those whose cashflow or future requirements are in foreign currency.

Sterling Bank started operations with a capital base of P1 billion or three times the BSP's requirement. With the seed money, the bank immediately grabbed a slot among the country's top 10 thrift banks in terms of capitalization.

The bank's shareholders are JTKC Equities Inc., Star Equities and Surewell Equities Inc. JTKC of the Tiu family and Star Equities have investments in a wide range of industries from logistics to finance, real estate as well as hotel and resorts. Among these are the Discovery Suites in Ortigas Center, the Mansions group of service apartments, Kent Vinyl Tiles and iRemit Global Remittance.

The group acquired dormant Far East Savings Bank from the Ayalas' Bank of the Philippine Islands. Far East Savings was nothing but a shell company with a banking license and some government securities holdings. The group also bought 14 of the BPI group's excess branches.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of December 12, 2007)

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		BANKS					
17.5	6.8	Asiatrust Development Bank Inc	8.7	8.7	8.6	8.7	22,000
73	43	Banco de Oro-EPCI Inc.	60	60	59	59	1,799,000
73.5	53	Bank of the Philippine Islands	62	63	61.5	61.5	2,696,500
748	544	China Banking Corp.	655	655	655	655	510
23.5	14	Citystate Savings Bank	23	23	23	23	100,000
0.63	0.36	Export and Industry Bank Inc.	0.39	0.39	0.38	0.36	2,460,000
75.5	47.5	Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co.	58	58.5	57	57	2,326,500
65.5	39	Philippine National Bank	49.5	51	49.5	50	531,400
68	47	Philippine Savings Bank	60	60	60	60	1,000
39.57	20.43	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	24.75	25	24.5	24.75	207,300
90	63	Security Bank Corp.	75	75	75	75	20,600
66	42	Union Bank of the Philippines	45	46	44.5	45.5	260,100
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
5.6	1.92	ATR KimEng Financial Corp.	4	4	4	4	10,000
2.22	0.6	Bankard Inc.	1.94	1.94	1.88	1.94	120,000
16.25	4.6	CitiSecOnline.com Inc.	11.25	11.5	11.25	11.5	331,900
1.6	0.5	First Abacus Financial Holdings Corp.	1	1	1	1	10,000
42.5	29	First Metro Investment Corp.	40.5	42	40.5	42	1,800
5.9	4.8	I-Remit Inc.	4.95	4.95	4.85	4.95	312,000
1,970.00	1,580.00	Manulife Financial Corp.	1,610.00	1,610.00	1,610.00	1,610.00	100
5	2.7	National Reinsurance Corp. of the Phils.	3.3	3.35	3.3	3.3	1,162,000
1,390.00	262.5	The Philippine Stock Exchange Inc.	1,060.00	1,060.00	1,050.00	1,050.00	4,300
2,500.00	1,970.00	Sun Life Financial Inc.	2,150.00	2,150.00	2,150.00	2,150.00	100
1.94	1.3	Vantage Corp.	1.52	1.52	1.48	1.5	2,150,000
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
6.2	3.6	Abreeza Power Corp.	5.2	5.3	5.1	5.3	784,000
0.57	0.22	East Asia Power Resources Corp.	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46	200,000
70.5	49	First Gen Corp.	61	61.5	61	61	275,500
92	57	First Phil. Holdings Corp.	74	74	72.5	73.5	693,200
18.5	8.8	Manila Water Co. Inc.	17.75	17.75	17.5	17.75	2,962,100
105.45	44.08	Manila Electric Co.	83.5	85.5	83.5	84.5	955,700
7.8	4.1	PNOC Energy Development Corp.	6.7	6.8	6.7	6.8	9,011,000
7.4	3.95	Petron Corp.	5.7	6.1	5.7	5.9	10,756,000
14.75	6.4	Phoenix Petroleum Philippines Inc	6.7	6.8	6.6	6.6	216,000
2.04	0.91	Trans-Asia Oil & Energy Dev't Corp.	1.34	1.34	1.3	1.3	3,356,000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
2.32	1.48	Alliance Tuna International Inc.	1.62	1.62	1.58	1.58	226,000
2.2	1.08	CADP Group Corp.	1.56	1.56	1.56	1.56	67,000
28.5	20	Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	23	23.5	23	23.5	70,600
61	40.5	Jollibee Foods Corp.	49.5	50	49	49.5	862,100
0.98	0.5	RFM Corp.	0.71	0.71	0.7	0.71	530,000
3.1	2.06	Roxas Holdings	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	702,000
60	42.5	San Miguel Corp. "A"	50	56	50	55	1,435,900
88	43	San Miguel Corp. "B"	50.5	55.5	50.5	55.5	2,232,000
20.75	13.5	Universal Robina Corp.	14	14.25	14	14	4,686,600
0.55	0.24	Vitarich Corp.	0.35	0.39	0.35	0.39	110,200
		CONSTRUCTION INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
6.1	2.65	EEI Corp.	4.35	4.35	4.35	4.35	30,000
21.5	6	Federal Res. Inv. Group	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	20,000
9.2	4.95	Holcim Philippines Inc.	8	8	7.8	7.8	13,000
2	0.81	Southeast Asia Cement Holdings Inc.	1.02	1.05	0.98	1.06	2,463,000
23	2.12	TKC Steel Corp.	9	9.2	8.9	9.2	918,000
		CHEMICALS					
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
0.75	0.175	Picop Resources Inc.	0.36	0.37	0.36	0.36	2,000,000
9	6.2	Splash Corp.	7.6	8.2	7.5	8.1	12,850,000
		HOLDING FIRMS					
39	18.75	ABS-CBN Holdings Corp. - Phil. Deposit Receipts	34.5	34.5	34.5	34.5	734,400
3.9	2.7	A. Soriano Corp.	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	60,000
0.185	0.0675	AJO net Holdings Inc.	0.125	0.13	0.125	0.13	22,590,000
1.28	0.3	APC Group Inc.	0.63	0.66	0.63	0.65	3,020,000
3.65	1.5	ATN Holdings Inc. "A"	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	147,000
0.018	0.0075	Abacus Cons. Res. & Hold'gs Inc. "A"	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	39,000,000
0.019	0.0075	Abacus Cons. Res. & Hold'gs Inc. "B"	0.011	0.011	0.01	0.01	2,009,600,000
9.7	5.8	Abolitiz Equity Ventures Inc.	7	7	7	7	1,823,000
0.021	0.0095	Alcorn Gold Resources Corp.	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	33,700,000
7.3	3.5	Alliance Global Group Inc.	5.1	5.3	4.95	5.2	26,808,000
2.9	0.93	Anglo-Philippine Holdings Corp.	2.34	2.38	2.34	2.38	308,000
645	400	Ayala Corp.	570	570	560	565	268,360
15.25	7.39	Bacnotan Consolidated Industries Inc.	13.25	13.25	13.25	13.25	2,000
5.8	2.1	Benpres Holdings Corp.	4.25	4.25	4.2	4.25	2,995,000
12	5.6	DMCI Holdings Inc.	9.6	9.6	9.4	9.6	2,421,000
3.55	1.76	House of Investments Inc.	2	2	2	2	507,000
14.5	8.9	JG Summit Holdings Inc.	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	316,400
5.9	0.61	Jolliville Holdings Corp.	1.78	1.78	1.78	1.78	1,000
28	1.42	Lodestar Investment Hldgs Corp.	19	19.5	18.25	19	6,500
11.5	1.5	Minerales Industrias Corp.	6.9	7.1	6.8	7	2,268,000
8.5	3	PAL Holdings Inc.	6.9	6.9	6.3	6.6	5,000
0.28	0.016	Pacifica Inc. "A"	0.23	0.24	0.23	0.235	54,810,000
0.75	0.19	Prime Orion Philippines Inc.	0.56	0.56	0.54	0.54	480,000
452.5	282.92	SM Investments Corp.	340	347.5	337.5	347.5	265,930
2.1	1.08	Seafront Resources Corp.	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12	72,000
0.73	0.15	Sinophil Corp.	0.36	0.36	0.35	0.35	1,750,000
0.75	0.12	Vantex Industries Inc.	0.3	0.32	0.3	0.32	210,000
		PROPERTY					
2.34	1	A Brown Co. Inc.	1.44	1.44	1.42	1.42	464,000
8.9	5	Anchor Land Holdings Inc.	5.9	7.3	5.9	7.1	26,000
19.25	12.08	Ayala Land Inc.	15.75	15.75	15.75	15.75	8,565,400
1.88	1	Belle Corp.	1.24	1.24	1.22	1.22	1,219,000
4.7	3.15	Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.6	3.65	3.6	3.65	5,000
3.63	1.9	City and Land Developers Inc.	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	16,000
2.7	1.25	Cityland Development Corp.	1.62	1.62	1.62	1.62	8,000
0.86	0.39	Crown Equities Inc.	0.57	0.59	0.57	0.59	110,000
0.83	0.24	Cyber Bay Corp.	0.41	0.41	0.39	0.39	5,910,000
0.99	0.53	Empire East Land Holdings Inc.	0.86	0.86	0.84	0.85	26,380,000
6.9	1.1	Eton Properties Philippines Inc.	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	15,000
0.47	0.0575	Ever Gotesco Resources & Hold'gs Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	1,080,000
1.48	0.61	Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.98	1.02	0.98	1.02	5,048,000
2.44	1.32	Filinvest Land Inc.	1.44	1.46	1.4	1.44	191,871,000
0.49	0.11	Gotesco Land Inc. "A"	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	300,000
1.12	0.31	MRC Allied Industries Inc.	0.61	0.61	0.6	0.6	450,000
4.6	2.18	Megaworld Corp.	4	4	3.9	3.95	84,845,000
6.4	1.5	Metro Pacific Investments Corp.	4.1	4.4	4.1	4.35	919,000
5.2	2.2	Metro Pacific Investments Corp. - Warrants	2.5	2.85	2.5	2.85	407,000
0.86	0.32	Philippine Realty & Holdings Corp.	0.48	0.48	0.43	0.46	50,000
9.2	1.7	Polar Property Holdings Corp.	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	5,000
23	14.5	Robinson Land Corp.	17	17	16.25	16.5	6,288,400
5.9	2	SM Development Corp.	3.85	3.95	3.85	3.95	174,000
13.5	7.84	SM Prime Holdings Inc.	10.75	10.75	10	10.25	31,676,600
3.25	1.5	Shang Properties Inc.	2.16	2.2	2.16	2.2	310,000
4.5	0.38	Sta. Lucia Land Inc.	2.16	2.16	2.06	2.06	441,000
1.34	0.46	Suntrust Home Developers Inc.	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	40,000
0.49	0.0975	Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.25	2,990,000
7.5	3.65	Vista Land and Lifescapes Inc.	5.8	6	5.7	5.9	3,131,000
		MEDIA					
12	7.6	GMA Holdings Inc.	8.3	8.3	8.2	8.2	2,364,000
11.75	7.5	GMA Network Inc.	8.1	8.1	8	8	118,000
1.03	0.81	Manila Bulletin Publishing Corp.	0.88	0.88	0.86	0.86	260,000
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
2.12	1.1	Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc.	1.38	1.38	1.36	1.38	412,000
1,750.00	1,180.00	Globe Telecom Inc.	1,570.00	1,570.00	1,500.00	1,500.00	108,310
3,285.00	2,250.00	Phil. Long Distance Telephone Co.	3,035.00	3,050.00	2,995.00	3,040.00	215,370
8.1	5.5	Pilipino Telephone Corp.	6.8	7	6.8	7	781,000
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
19.75	4.1	Diversified Financial Network Inc.	15.25	15.75	15	15.5	1,365,000
11.5	3.55	IPVG Corp.	8.3	8.3	8.1	8.2	308,000
0.065	0.027	ISM Communications Corp.	0.038	0.04	0.038	0.039	36,900,000
29.5	8.5	Imperial Resources Inc. "A"	16	16	16	16	5,300
2.9	1.1	Ionics Inc.	1.68	1.68	1.66	1.66	320,000
0.32	0.05	Island Information & Technology Inc.	0.18	0.185	0.18	0.18	8,000,000
2.24	1.1	Music Semiconductors Corp.	2.04	2.16	2	2.08	4,369,000
0.0725	0.03	Philweb Corp.	0.048	0.048	0.047	0.048	47,100,000
5.7	1.64	Transpacific Broadband Group Int'l Inc.	2.55	2.6	2.55	2.55	371,000
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
2.14	1.2	Abacus Transport System Corp.	1.26	1.26	1.26	1.26	181,000
6.8	3.6	Asian Terminals Inc.	3.95	3.95	3.9	3.9	410,000
49	18.75	Int'l Container Terminal Services Inc.	45	45	44	44	1,220,300
2.16	0.93	Kepsal Philippines Marine Inc.	2	2	2	2	170,000
2.7	1.12	Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.66	1.66	1.66	1.66	31,000
		HOTEL & LEISURE					
4.25	1.6	Leisure and Resorts World Corp.	2.42	2.44	2.4	2.44	861,000
1.52	0.33	Premiere Entertainment Prod Inc.	1.4	1.44	1.38	1.38	7,380,000
1.2	0.55	Waterfront Philippines Inc.	0.86	0.86	0.86	0.86	371,000
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
43	6.6	JTH Davies Holdings Inc.	29	30	28.5	29.5	43,100
6	2.04	Macroasia Corp.	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	6,000
17.25	9.8	Pacific Online Systems Corp.	11.25	11.25	11.25	11.25	2,000
20	6.2	Paxys Inc.	6.3	6.4	6.3	6.3	78,000
		MINING					
0.017	0.0085	Abra Mining and Industrial Corp.	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	70,000,000
7.2	3.6	Apex Mining Co. Inc. "A"	6.3	6.3	6.1	6.2	166,000
21.25	8.1	Atlas Cons. Mining and Dev't Corp.	13.5	13.5	13.5	13.5	403,700
20.5	8.9	Benguet Corp. "A"	18	20	18	20	789,100
35	24	Benguet Corp. "B"	25	25	25	25	100
12.75	1.96	Dizon Copper Silver Mines Inc.	10	10	9.7	9.8	389,100
3.1	0.6	Geograce Resources Philippines Inc.	2.06	2.1	2.04	2.08	41,931,000
0.56	0.18	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. "A"	0.52	0.52	0.5	0.52	38,130,000
0.61	0.22	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. "B"	0.55	0.57	0.55	0.56	14,940,000
0.038	0.017	Manila Mining Corp. "A"	0.028	0.029	0.028	0.028	88,500,000
0.041	0.02	Manila Mining Corp. "B"	0.031	0.031	0.031	0.031	1,300,000
30	3.6	NiHAO Minerals Resources Int'l Inc.	21.25	21.75	21.25	21.75	466,100
0.021	0.0088	Omico Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	38,200,000
0.015	0.007	Omico Corp. - Warrants	0.009	0.009	0.0085	0.0085	17,000,000
11.25	3.5	Philex Mining Corp.	9.6	9.7	9.5	9.6	14,620,000
49.5	14.75	Semirara Mining Corp.	42	42	40	40	27,500
1.36	0.65	United Paragon Mining Corp.	0.7	0.72	0.7	0.72	650,000
		OIL					
0.56	0.26	Basic Energy Corp.	0.3	0.32	0.3	0.32	1,050,000
0.029	0.01	Oriental Pet. & Minerals Corp. "A"	0.024	0.025	0.023	0.023	137,600,000
13.75	9	Petroenergy Resources Corp.	9.9	9.9	9.9	9.9	76,000
0.032	0.0097	The Philodrill Corp.	0.029	0.029	0.028	0.028	84,200,000

	AVERAGES		VOLUME	VALUE
Financial	864.40 DOWN	29.56	14,637,110	478,309,375.00
Industrial	4,404.83 UP	12.61	59,543,700	763,827,305.00
Holding Firms	2,040.84 DOWN	41.71	2,203,484,190	490,640,805.00
Property	1,556.38 DOWN	57.11	374,919,400	1,240,223,470.00
Service	1,826.58 DOWN	17.98	111,332,780	933,272,890.00
Mining & Oil	8,404.85 DOWN	211.41	533,438,600	303,396,315.00
All Shares Index	2,207.37 DOWN	36.38		
PSEI	3,605.59 DOWN	66.79		
		GRAND TOTALS	3,297,355,780	4,209,670,160.00

COMPILED BY SCHATZI QUODALA, INQUIRER RESEARCH — SOURCE: TECHNISTOCK, PSE

CURRENCIES

December 12, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.682221	1.000000	41.4440
Japan	Yen	0.006168	0.009041	0.3747
United Kingdom	Pound	1.388047	2.034600	84.3220
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.087507	0.128268	5.3159
Switzerland	Franc	0.603415	0.884486	36.6566
Canada	Dollar	0.672802	0.986193	40.8718
Singapore	Dollar	0.472093	0.691994	28.6790
Australia	Dollar	0.604217	0.885661	36.7053
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.819257	2.666667	110.5173
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.182412	0.267380	11.0813
Brunei	Dollar	0.470465	0.689608	28.5801
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000074	0.000108	0.0045
Thailand	Baht	0.022523	0.033014	1.3682
UAE	Dirham	0.185770	0.272301	11.2852
EU	Euro	1.000000	1.465800	60.7486
Korea	Won	0.000739	0.001083	0.0449
China	Yuan**	0.092436	0.135492	5.6153
Denmark	Kroner	0.134079	0.196533	8.1451
India	Rupee	0.017355	0.025439	1.0543
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.205984	0.301932	12.5133
New Zealand	Dollar	0.533777	0.782411	32.4262
Sweden	Kroner	0.105868	0.155181	6.4313
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.021100	0.030928	1.2818

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY time—Dec. 11, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian time closing rate as of Dec. 11, 2007

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Gov't debt down to ₱3.83T in Sept.

By Michelle V. Remo

THE APPRECIATION OF THE PESO helped ease the government's outstanding debt to P3.832 trillion as of end-September, down one percent from the P3.871 trillion the previous month.

If the amount were divided among the country's projected population of 88.7 million Filipinos this year, each would have a share of P43,201 in the government's debt burden.

Data from the Bureau of the Treasury showed that the outstanding debt as of September was composed of P2.206 trillion from domestic creditors and P1.626 trillion from foreign lenders.

Officials said the government had adopted the policy of depending more on local borrowings and less on foreign loans to minimize the country's exposure to foreign exchange volatility.

The total outstanding domestic debt was 1.8 percent higher than the P2.167 trillion posted in August, while foreign liabilities were down 4.6 percent from the P1.704 trillion.

The increase in the domestic debt meant the government's fresh borrowings exceeded the amount of maturing obligations it settled, the BTr said in a statement. The government still needed to borrow to plug the programmed budget deficit of P63 billion for the year. The decline in foreign debt was partly due to the appreciation of the peso.

Government data showed the peso averaged 45.063 to a US dollar from January to September this year, stronger than the 46.695 recorded average in the first eight months.

The BTr said the amount of foreign loans paid in September was higher than the fresh borrowings made, the reason why the outstanding foreign debt marked a month-on-month decline.

The BTr also reported that the government's contingent debt as of September hit P513.5 billion, down 4.4 percent from P537.2 billion the previous month.

Contingent liabilities are debts of government-owned and controlled corporations or government financial institutions covered by sovereign guarantee. Once the state-owned firms default on the payment of these loans, the liabilities become part of the national government's debt.

Of the contingent liabilities, P65 billion are domestic borrowings and P448.5 billion represent foreign currency-denominated debts.

The government's debt stock was a result of its accumulated borrowings over the years. It borrows yearly to plug deficiencies in its expenditure requirements and pay maturing obligations.

CIIF Oil Mills, UK-based partner embark on ₱30-M research project

By Amy R. Remo

THE COCONUT INDUSTRY INVESTMENT Fund Oil Mills Group has ventured into a P30-million research and development project with a UK-based firm to look into the use of coconut oil as a source of other higher value coconut products.

Danilo M. Coronacion, CIIF Oil Mills Groups president, said the project with the International Fuel Technology of UK would study a "fractionation" process to maximize use of medium chain fatty acid (MCFA) from coconut oil for industrial uses.

He said the project would also study the possibility of the use of coconut oil not only for the recently commercialized coconut methyl ester or biodiesel, but also for biolubricants, other oleochemicals and a type of biodiesel that could be mixed with jatropha.

The study likewise aims to derive from coconut oil valuable chemical properties for higher value products, like bio-lubricants, to optimize and lower the costs of local feedstock.

The country's present use of coconut oil for biodiesel was based on technologies for long chain fatty acid (LCFA), particularly influenced by US or German technologies.

These technologies were designed for LCFA soybean oil, rapeseed oil or palm oil.

The proposed technology for MCFA may lower costs and even maximize the coconut oil's competitive advantage.

While exploring viable products from the MCFA technology, the research will also work on the blending of coconut oil with jatropha oil.

Last January, President Macapagal-Arroyo signed into law Republic Act 9367 or the Biofuels Law, which aims to ease the country's dependence on imported, dollar-draining and pollution-generating energy sources.

The law likewise made mandatory the blending of ethanol and coco biodiesel in petroleum products.

RA 9367 also provides a package of incentives for investors in the biofuels sector, including exemption from the payment of specific and value-added taxes and provision of financing for those engaged in the production, handling, and transport of biofuel and biofuel feedstock.

Nido Petroleum set to wind up data gathering off Northwest Palawan

By Abigail L. Ho

WITH THE COMPLETION OF ITS SEISMIC survey for Service Contract 54 off Northwest Palawan, Australia-based Nido Petroleum Ltd. is set to finish data acquisition for SC 63 in the same area in the next few days.

In a disclosure to the Australian Stock Exchange, Nido managing director David Whitby said that although delayed for a few days last month due to bad weather conditions, the SC 63 survey should be completed "in the next few days."

The survey resumed last Nov. 30, and was now more than 93-percent complete, he said.

Once finished, he said, all gathered seismic data would be processed by CGGVeritas in Malaysia.

Nido has a stake in SC 63, which is being operated by PNOC Exploration Corp., a subsidiary of the Philippine National Oil Co.

Meanwhile, the acquisition of 661 square kilometers of 3D and 2,350 kilometers of 2D seismic data for SC 58 was already 43-percent complete as of Dec. 7, Whitby said.

The data gathering, which started on Nov. 1, was expected to be completed by end-January 2008, "subject to weather delays," he added.

Nido last Oct. 30 completed its acquisition of 165 sq. km. of new 3D seismic for SC 54. Data processing was now being done by CGGVeritas in Singapore.

The three surveys form Nido's largest seismic acquisition campaign to date, spanning a combined total of 5,475 km. of 2D and 826 sq. km. of 3D seismic data.

Completion of the data acquisition, processing and analysis would allow Nido to create a concrete exploration plan in the coming months.

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Global markets gloomy even after Fed cuts key policy rates

TOKYO—ASIAN STOCK MARKETS skidded lower Wednesday, following Wall Street into the red, on fears that a quarter-point interest rate cut by the Federal Reserve may not be enough to ward off a US recession, dealers said.

They said that, while the US central bank's decision to trim its key federal funds interest rate by 25 basis points to 4.25 percent was in line with market expectations, some investors had been hoping for a more aggressive cut.

Markets in Asia, however, managed to recover some of their losses in late trade as investors took the view that the initial sell-off was excessive.

Tokyo ended down 0.70 percent, Shanghai lost 1.54 percent and Sydney fell 1.0 percent.

Hong Kong was down 1.5 percent in late deals as Singapore slid 1.2 percent.

"It seems that investors want the Fed to solve all the ills of the US economy with one shot," said Benjamin Collett, head of hedge fund sales trading at Daiwa Securities Co. in Hong Kong.

"Some sectors want the Fed to support the economy much more aggressively," he said.

On Wall Street, the Dow Jones index dropped 2.14 percent Tuesday in the wake of the Fed's third interest rate cut since September to try to cushion the world's largest economy from mortgage and credit market problems.

The US housing woes have triggered multibillion-dollar losses for major banks that snapped up mortgage-backed securities during a housing boom.

This in turn has led to a credit crunch, as banks become wary of lending money to each other, and higher short-term interest rates.

"The disappointment with the Fed's action will see investors once again worrying that the credit crunch and housing slump could send the US into recession," warned NAB Capital economist John Kyriakopoulos.

Global stocks had enjoyed a strong rally since the start of the month on hopes of another US rate cut and a White House plan to help struggling American homeowners meet their mortgage repayments.

With the rate cut out of the way, investors moved to lock in some of those recent gains amid jitters that the fallout from the US subprime loan crisis has yet to fully run its course.

"All the goods news is out now," said Hiroyuki Nakai, chief strategist at Tokai Tokyo Research Center. "Investors don't expect much from US investment banks' quarterly earnings later this week and forthcoming US economic data."

Elsewhere, Taipei ended down 1.71 percent and Wellington dipped 0.69 percent. Bucking the trend, Seoul ended up 0.1 percent.

CommSec chief equities economist Craig James said investors would get over the apparent "shock" of the Fed's smaller-than-expected rate cut.

"Recent economic data in the US has been encouraging, although clearly, risks continue to lie ahead," James said.

The dollar turned lower against the euro and pound sterling in Asian trade in the wake of the US rate cut, but rebounded against the yen.

The dollar climbed to 110.94 yen after 110.64. *AFP*

Oil drops as US pipelines restart after ice storm

SINGAPORE—OIL PRICES ON WEDNESDAY dropped in Asia on reports pipelines shut by an ice storm in the US Midwest had been restarted, and after the Federal Reserve cut a key interest rate less than many had hoped.

An ice storm that caused outages of key oil pipelines in the United States helped drive oil prices up by more than $2 a barrel in the previous session. But Dow Jones Newswires reported that at least one of the pipelines—some of which serve the closely watched New York Mercantile Exchange delivery terminal at Cushing, Oklahoma—had been quickly restarted and that three others would soon follow suit.

"Yesterday's $2 increase was primarily driven by the rather severe ice storm that knocked out power around Cushing," said Victor Shum, an energy analyst with Purvin & Gertz in Singapore. "But that's just a short term weather thing, no real disruption there, so that's why the oil price is edging down some."

Light, sweet crude for January delivery fell 36 cents to $89.63 a barrel in Asian electronic trading on the Nymex by late afternoon in Singapore. The contract rose $2.16 to settle at $90.02 a barrel Tuesday.

While traders saw the Fed's decision to cut its federal funds rate by one-quarter percentage point to 4.25 percent as a move that will help the US economy—the world's top oil consumer—and bolster demand for crude, many were hoping for a larger half-point cut.

Market participants were also eyeing the release Wednesday of a report by the US Energy Department's Energy Information Administration expected to show domestic crude oil and petroleum product stockpiles rose last week.

The average forecast of analysts polled by Dow Jones Newswires was for crude supplies to grow by 100,000 barrels.

Gasoline inventories were estimated to increase 1.2 million barrels. Distillate stocks, which include diesel and heating oil, were tipped to rise 300,000 barrels, the survey showed. *AP*

China, US swap complaints in trade talks

Chinese officials cite structural problems in US economy

XIANGHE, CHINA—CHINA TOLD the United States Wednesday to fix its own economic problems rather than deliver lectures, as the two sides warned at top-level talks here that protectionism threatened their trade ties.

The United States came to the two days of talks on the outskirts of Beijing with a long list of complaints about China's economic and trade practices, with the value of the Chinese currency, the yuan, chief among its concerns.

But China's vice minister of commerce, Chen Deming, said a weakening US dollar was a bigger global economic concern than the value of the yuan.

"(The yuan) is not the key issue," Chen told reporters on the sidelines of the conference. "Currently, my focus is more on the depreciation of the US dollar and its possible impact and repercussions for the world economy. I sincerely wish to see a scenario where the US economy is getting stronger and the US dollar is getting stronger."

In her opening remarks to the third Sino-US Strategic Economic Dialogue, the head of China's delegation, Vice Premier Wu Yi, also told the United States bluntly to fix its own problems rather than complain about China.

"Obviously, to resort to trade protectionism and blame another country for the structural problems in the US economy is the wrong approach, which would only harm the interest of the United States itself," Wu said.

Structural problems in the US economy include a low savings rate and a large public deficit, economists say.

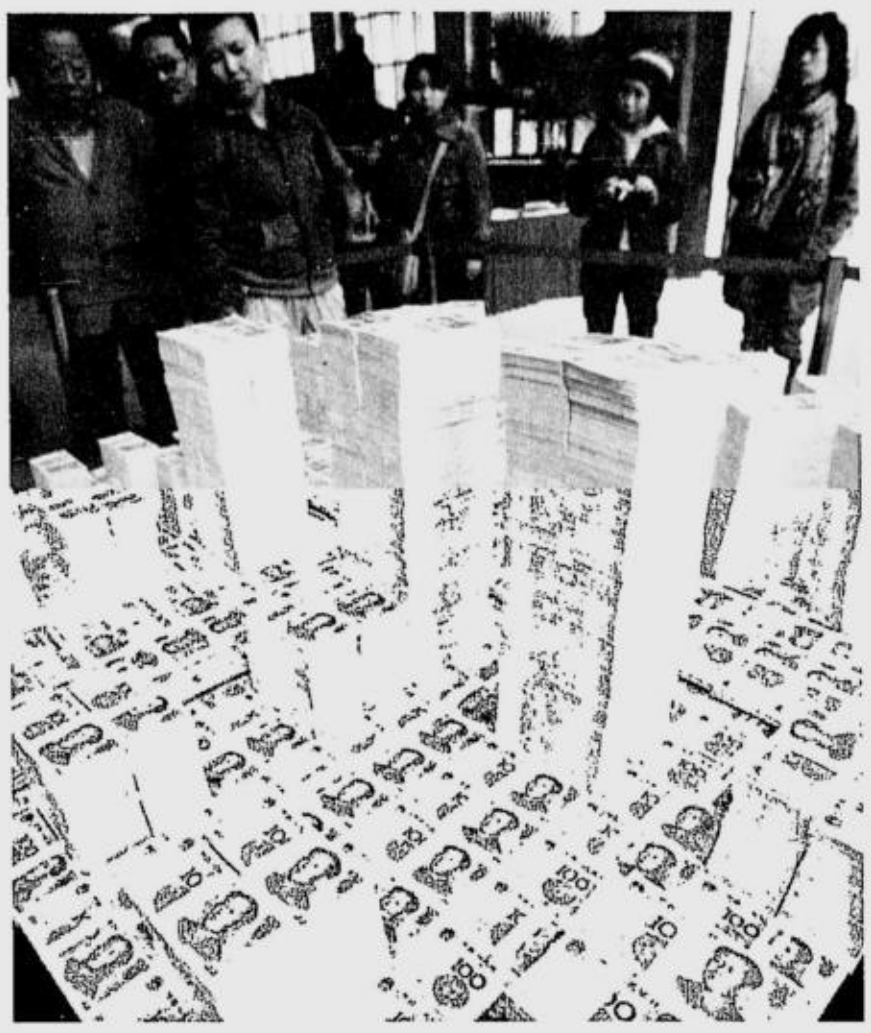
Proposed US trade legislation to punish China for alleged unfair trade practices would be a mistake, Wu warned.

"I am particularly concerned about the 50 or so protectionist China-related bills introduced in the US Congress," said Wu. "I need to be quite candid about this: If these bills are adopted, they will severely undermine US business ties with China."

US officials have repeatedly argued that China is employing unfair trade practices by keeping the tightly-controlled yuan artificially weak.

This gives Chinese exporters an unfair advantage when selling goods in the United States, and is a big factor behind the massive US trade deficit with China that hit $23.8 billion in September, according to US figures.

The leader of the US delegation, Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson, repeated his calls at the start of the talks for Beijing to loosen its controls over the yuan, arguing it was in China's economic interests to do so. *AFP*



PEOPLE look at a model of Beijing's Central Business District made from Chinese yuan notes. China and the United States yesterday warned each other that their booming but tense trade relationship was under threat from protectionism, as they began two days of top-level economic talks. AFP

Corporate America braces for slowdown

WASHINGTON—THE US ECONOMY IS OFten compared to a supertanker and, although Tuesday's interest rate cut by the Federal Reserve may ease its passage, corporate America is bracing for stormy seas ahead.

Many economists expect an almost two-year-long housing slump, tighter credit and high energy costs to slow US economic momentum and dent corporate coffers in coming months.

The Fed, in announcing a quarter-point cut in US borrowing costs to 4.25 percent, said it appears "that economic growth is slowing" which it partly blamed on softer business and consumer spending.

US stock markets plummeted in the wake of the announcement signaling Wall Street's disappointment that a heavier rate cut was not implemented. The Dow Jones Industrial Average closed down 2.1 percent while the broad market Standard and Poor's 500 index lost 2.5 percent.

Some large corporations have cut their profit forecasts in recent weeks as concerns mount over whether the world's biggest economy will slide into a recession.

"A mild recession is now likely," economists at Morgan Stanley said in a research note released Monday, adding that further Fed rate cuts are also expected.

The Morgan Stanley economists expect corporate earnings to contract by between five and 10 percent through much of 2008. Other analysts remain more upbeat, however.

Corporate chieftains usually curtail spending and investment during leaner economic times which, in turn, contributes to slower economic growth.

Big financial firms, which have already lost billions of dollars, and mortgage companies are suffering the worst pain from the housing meltdown and credit crunch.

Economists fear the credit squeeze and a surge in home foreclosures could spill over into consumer loans and pinch other sectors such as auto makers.

US light vehicle sales fell last month to 1.179 million, 1.6 percent down from a year earlier, and some analysts believe the lingering housing downturn could drag down car sales.

Delta Air Lines executive vice president, Glen Hauenstein, said last week the airline was experiencing "some softening from recent robust domestic demand" amid high fuel prices.

But many American companies and shareholders are still profiting handsomely. *AFP*

Pandit becomes Citigroup's new CEO

NEW YORK—CITIGROUP INC. named investment banking head Vikram Pandit as chief executive and acting CEO Win Bischoff as chairman on Tuesday, disappointing investors who wanted a big-name outsider to overhaul the bank.

Citi had been seeking a replacement for former CEO Charles Prince, who left on Nov. 4 under pressure from shareholders frustrated by the performance of the largest US financial services company.

Citi shares have fallen by about a third this year, and the company has taken massive write-downs for mortgage-related holdings.

The appointment of Bischoff, 66, was a surprise.

Formerly chairman of Citi's international businesses, Bischoff served as acting CEO for the past five weeks.

Former Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin, who has served as chairman in the interim, will return to his duties as chairman of the executive committee.

Pandit's career has included heading investment banking and capital markets at Morgan Stanley.

He joined Citigroup five months ago when the bank bought his year-old hedge fund firm, Old Lane Partners, for $800 million.

But some investors expressed concern that the 50-year-old, India-born executive has never run a public company, let alone one as big and complex as Citi.

Pandit also has no experience leading a consumer business, which at Citi generates more than half of overall revenue.

"There was some hope that somebody with a bigger name would be chosen, so maybe, from that perspective, there is some disappointment," said Lee Delaporte, research director at Dreman Value Management, which has $22 billion of assets and has sold its Citi holdings. *Reuters*

PANDIT

BSP hints at new interest rate cut

From page B1

Six of nine treasury experts polled by the INQUIRER yesterday after the US Fed rate cut said the policy-making Monetary Board would lower interest rates for the third straight month during its Dec. 20 meeting.

In an interview, Hong Kong-based HSBC economist Frederic Neumann said Tetangco's statement indicated that the BSP was still in a monetary easing cycle.

"Even prior to this statement, market expectation has been building up that there would be another cut this year," Neumann said. "The expectations are for as long as the Fed cuts, it provides Asian central banks room for monetary easing."

"It's very unusual for BSP to cut so many times. However, the window of opportunity to cut rates is slowly disappearing because of pressures on inflation to rise next year," he said.

Neumann added that the fact that the next Monetary Board meeting was rescheduled ahead of Christmas, from the previous date of Dec. 27, was a signal that this next meeting was particularly important.

Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. senior vice president Marcelo Ayes said the BSP chief's statement was a clear signal that there would be another 25-basis-point cut this month.

"At least it will slow down the peso's appreciation," he said.

Chinatrust Commercial Bank treasurer Roland Avante, who earlier saw a 50-50 probability that the BSP would pause on its interest rate easing cycle this month, said he was now convinced that the central bank would slash its overnight borrowing rates by a quarter percentage point.

The BSP's overnight borrowing rate is at 5.5 percent and its lending rate at 7.5 percent, the lowest levels since the independent central bank was created in 1993. The central bank has reduced its benchmark rates by half a percentage point over the last two months.

But there were some who believed that the BSP might pause on its interest rate-easing this month.

Jonathan Ravelas, chief strategist at Equitable PCI Bank, said the BSP's rate cut in November might be the last for this year, given the country's good economic growth numbers.

"The Fed's decision to cut its discount rate tempers the view of drastic rate cuts," Ravelas said.

US inflation keeps heat on central banks

WASHINGTON—THE US FEDERAL Reserve interest rate cut may have been a foregone conclusion as far as financial markets are concerned, but a heaping helping of global inflation data may leave a sour aftertaste.

Nagging inflation, largely from steep energy and food prices, is forcing central bankers onto a narrow plank as they seek the right balance between promoting growth and keeping prices in check.

Inflation hawks will likely be heard at least faintly in the closely watched statement announcing the Fed's decision to cut key rates.

Last week, the European Central Bank kept rates on hold but acknowledged that some members had considered a hike to tamp down rising prices.

ECB president Jean-Claude Trichet said the euro zone central bank "stands ready to counter upside risks to price stability," which sent a signal to investors that rate cuts were unlikely any time soon.

The Fed will probably take a softer tone, leaving the door open to lowering borrowing costs further early next year, amid expectations that a slowing economy will ease price pressure in other key areas such as wages.

However, recent data hasn't been going the Fed's way. A report on the US labor market's health on Friday showed wages rose by a surprisingly large 0.5 percent in November.

Higher-than-expected readings on the US producer and consumer price indexes, due on Thursday and Friday, may prompt some second-guessing, particularly if the Fed does opt for the more aggressive half-point cut.

Global Insight expects a hefty 2.5 percent rise in the PPI, which would be the fourth-largest jump since the index began in 1947.

But the "core" rate, stripping out food and energy costs, should remain relatively tame.

"While the top-level number will be a shocker, we do not expect the moderate rise in the core rate to cause Fed chair Ben Bernanke to fall out of bed at night," Global Insight's economists wrote in a note to clients.

Exporting powerhouse China's consumer price index is also expected this week, and will likely show inflation moderated only slightly from an 11-year high notched in October.

Many economists, including former Fed chair Alan Greenspan, think China's deflationary power is petering out, and rising domestic prices will filter through into its exports.

To be sure, the US dollar has shown signs of stabilizing, and oil has dipped below $90 per barrel, giving inflation-watchers some breathing room.

However, with Opec declining to boost output and with crop prices still high, food and energy costs are likely to remain elevated for some time.

Perhaps more worrisome, there are signs that US consumers' inflation expectations may be coming unstuck, another threat to already sluggish spending growth. *Reuters*

Gov't generates ₱90B from asset privatization

More than half came from sale of 60% stake in PNOC-EDC

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT RAISED P90 billion from the sale of state-owned assets this year, the biggest earnings registered so far under the privatization program.

The Department of Finance earlier said the government would intensify its privatization efforts as a means of generating revenues. It also said that the sale of state-owned assets deemed better run by the private sector would help improve the delivery of public services.

The DOF said that of the P90 billion, about P47 billion came from the sale of the government's remaining 60-percent stake in PNOC-Energy Development Corp. which was booked in November.

PNOC-EDC was the last state-owned asset in the pipeline for privatization this year.

The recent PNOC-EDC sale generated a total of P58.5 billion, P47 billion of which went to the state coffers and the balance to Philippine National Oil Co.

In July, the government also sold 20 percent of its stake in PNOC-EDC for P17.1 billion. Of the amount, P15.6 billion went to the state coffers.

Other assets sold this year were the government's 46-percent stake in Philippine Telecommunications Investment Corp. (PTIC) for P25.2 billion; the old Iloilo airport property for P1.2 billion, and a minority stake in Philippine National Bank for P998 million.

"The government raised P90 billion from January to November, exceeding the full-year target of only P25.3 billion," Finance Undersecretary Crisanta Legaspi, who is in charge of privatization matters, told reporters yesterday.

After completing its privatization program for this year, Legaspi said the government would start work on other big-ticket assets to be sold next year.

Legaspi said the government was projecting some P30 billion in earnings from privatization next year. Up for sale next year include a Food Terminals Inc. property in Taguig and the government's 12-percent stake in Manila Electric Co. These are the top priorities for privatization next year, she said.

The finance official said this was a conservative target, as other assets might also be offered for sale next year if there would be huge demand.

The government also expressed intention earlier to dispose of its 24-percent stake in San Miguel Corp., the Al-Amanah Islamic Bank, and the New Bilibid Prison property in Muntinlupa.

Legaspi said the government was not intending to sell all the remaining big-ticket assets next year, as it pushes the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau of Customs to improve their revenue collection performance.

The government was forced this year to intensify its privatization efforts due to the BIR's huge collection shortfalls.

The BIR collected P575.4 billion in taxes in the first 10 months, off its target for the period by P54.1 billion.

The BIR was tasked to collect P765 billion this year to help meet the government's deficit-reduction goal. But finance officials admitted that the BIR target was no longer attainable.

No need to amend Epira, says Seipi

By Abigail L. Ho

INSTEAD OF AMENDING THE Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001 (Epira), the Semiconductor and Electronics Industries in the Philippines Inc. (Seipi) urges government to just direct its efforts on accelerating the privatization of National Power Corp.'s assets.

In a letter to Pampanga Rep. and House committee on energy chair Juan Miguel Arroyo, Seipi president Ernie Santiago said there was no need to amend the existing law if the objective was to implement retail competition and open access.

He said the government, through the Joint Congressional Power Commission (JCPC), could instead opt to accelerate the implementation of retail competition and open access, even without meeting some of the provisions set in the Epira, particularly with regard to the Napocor privatization process.

However, he said certain safeguards should be put in place, including a shield from the still dominant position of Napocor in the market.

"The early implementation of open access and retail competition may be achieved without the disruptions associated with amending laws. We believe the private stakeholders may be amenable to accepting immediate open access and retail competition, provided they would not be faced with the prospect of having to compete with Napocor," Santiago said.

He said JCPC could declare retail competition and open access, sans Napocor, even under the existing law.

"In this way, no violation of the Epira may arise and no cumbersome amendment would be necessary," he said.

Before retail competition and open access can be implemented, the Epira provides that five requirements have to be met: the establishment and commercial operation of a wholesale electricity spot market, the approval of unbundled transmission and distribution wheeling charges, the implementation of the cross-subsidy removal scheme, the privatization of 70 percent of Napocor's Luzon and Visayas capacities, and the transfer of 70 percent of Napocor capacity covered by independent power producer contracts to IPP administrators.

Only the first three requirements have been met so far.

The amendment bill, filed by Arroyo and Camarines Sur Rep. Luis Villafuerte, sought to bring down the current 70-percent Napocor privatization threshold to only 50 percent so that retail competition and open access could be implemented soon.

Healthway puts up ₱200-M branch in QC

By Ronnel W. Domingo

HEALTHWAY MEDICAL, WHICH operates a network of mall-based outpatient clinics in Metro Manila, is investing P200 million in a new branch at Gateway Mall in Araneta Center, Quezon City.

Roy O. Emata, company chief finance officer, said in an interview that about half of the amount would cover construction of the facility while the rest would be spent on equipment and the hiring of staff.

Emata said Healthway offered a wide range of medical service—including family medicine, pediatrics, gynecology, internal medicine, and general surgery—in a one-stop shop setting.

He said Healthway's Hong Kong-based parent firm, GenRx Healthway, was also making parallel moves in the territory as well as in mainland China where a total of four new branches were slated for launch in 2008.

Gov't urged to raise agri infra spending

By Amy R. Remo

AGRICULTURE SECRETARY Arthur C. Yap is urging the government to increase infrastructure spending for the agriculture sector to encourage investments in farm and fisheries projects.

"From the approved 2008 budget of P25 billion for the agriculture sector, only P19 billion will go to programs and projects, the rest will be for administrative expenses," Yap said.

Of the total loans lent by banks last year, he said only 5 percent went to the farm sector.

He said investments in the farm and fisheries sector remained marginal.

"The government is currently the biggest investor in agriculture and it should continue to do so," he stressed

Yap, however, noted a recent influx of investments in the agriculture sector by Chinese and Spanish firms.

Last week, the Spanish government and several private firms had expressed interest in investing in the country's biofuel, agriculture and fisheries sectors.

Through the Department of Agriculture, the government inked several multimillion-dollar agreements with Spain to strengthen agricultural ties and open new windows of cooperation in biofuels production, agriculture, micro-financing, and coastal management.

This marked the first time that the Philippines had inked a bilateral deal with a major European economy.

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Submission of the Pre-qualification Requirements shall not be later than 5:00 pm of December 12, 2007 and no documents appertaining thereto, shall be accepted thereafter.

All applicants will be duly notified as to the results of the pre-qualification eligibility process. Only those who are pre-qualified will be allowed to participate in the bidding. A post-qualification may be conducted accordingly hereafter

Bidding will be conducted on December 13, 2007

Sealed bid in duplicate copies should be submitted to the Committee on Bids and Awards at the Office of the Finance Department at the above-mentioned address on or before 2:00 p.m. of December 13, 2007. Five percent (5%) Bidder's Bond is required as a matter of policy.

The right to reject any or all bids, to waive any formality therein, or to accept such bid as may be considered advantageous to the coop is hereby reserved as an absolute prerogative of ZAMCELCO.

(Sgd.) REINERIO R. RAMOS
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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
No. 2007-001-Infra

Bidding for the Hiring of an Architectural and Engineering Design Firm for the Construction of PhilHealth Corporate Center

The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth), through its Bids and Awards Committee for Infrastructure (BAC-Infra), invites consultants to apply for eligibility and shortlisting and if found eligible and shortlisted, to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project	Hiring of an Architectural and Engineering Design Firm for the Construction of PhilHealth Corporate Center
Approved Budget For the Contract	Php28, 467, 556.22
Source of Funding	*COB 2007*
Contract Duration	six (6) months

The list of minimum requirements is indicated in the Eligibility Requirements List. Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last ten (10) years and have key personnel and equipment (owned, leased or under purchase) available for the prosecution of the project. Eligibility of prospective bidders shall be checked using non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Shortlisting of eligible consultants will be done based on the following criteria: experience of the consultant (30%), qualification of personnel (50%) and current workload (20%). Only five (5) eligible bidders shall make up the shortlist. The evaluation procedure to be adopted shall be Quality-Cost Based Evaluation *(QCBE)*. Bids whose technical proposals pass the minimum technical rating of seventy percent (70%) shall have its financial proposals opened and evaluated. The technical proposal and financial proposal shall carry sixty percent (60%) and forty percent (40%) weight in the bid evaluation, respectively, where in the event of a tie in the top overall rating, the bidder with the lowest quoted financial proposal among the tied bidders shall be declared as the highest rated bid.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The schedule of activities is as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Submission of Letters of Intent and Application for Eligibility	December 14 - 21, 2007
2. Issuance of Eligibility Forms	December 14 - 21, 2007
3. Deadline for the submission of Eligibility Requirements	December 21, 2007
4. Results of Eligibility Check	December 26 - 28, 2007
5. Results of Short Listing	December 26 - 28, 2007
6. Issuance of Bid Documents	January 3 - 9, 2008
7. Pre-bid Conference	January 10, 2008, 10:30 AM

The Eligibility Requirements List will be available at the Secretariat for the Bids and Awards Committees Office, upon submission of a Letter of Intent (LOI), and upon payment of a non-refundable amount of one thousand pesos (Php1, 000.00) cash to the PhilHealth Cashier. Submission of eligibility documents shall be in the same office.

Bid Documents will be available only to shortlisted bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Ten Thousand Pesos (Php10, 000.00) cash to the PhilHealth Cashier.

PhilHealth assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

PhilHealth reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

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e-mail add: osbac@philhealth.gov.ph
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(Sgd.) OCTAVINO Q. ESGUERRA
Senior Vice President
Actuarial Services and Risk Management Sector
Chairperson, BAC-Infra

(PDI - December 13, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM
East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. Nos. (632) 920-6401 • (632) 920-6446
E-mail: member_relations@sss.gov.ph • Website: http://www.sss.gov.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

IAEB No. 2007-007- Consulting

DEDICATED SURVEY ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION OF SSS MEMBERS (RE-PUBLICATION)

The bid aims to engage the services of a Consultant to undertake the survey of SSS members on their satisfaction on SSS services, policies and programs

1. The SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM (SSS), through the *2007 Approved Budget for Consultancy Services*, intends to apply the sum of Four Million Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (P4,500,000.00), being the Approved Budget for Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for Dedicated Survey of Customer Satisfaction of SSS members. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at bid opening.
2. The SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM now calls for the submission of Letters of Intent (LOIs) from potential bidders to apply for eligibility and shortlisting for the *conduct of one (1) round of nationwide customer satisfaction survey of SSS members*. Interested consultants must submit their LOIs on or before January 04, 2008 at the Bids & Awards Committee (BAC) Secretariat, 6th Floor, SSS Main Building, East avenue, Diliman, Quezon City and secure therefrom Part I of the Bidding Documents consisting of the Eligibility Documents. Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a "pass/fail" basis. The last day for the submission of the accomplished Eligibility Documents shall be on the date of the opening of Eligibility Documents on January 18, 2008 not later than 2:00p.m. at *the Green Room, 12th floor, SSS Building, East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City*. Any Eligibility Documents submitted after this deadline shall be declared "Late" and shall not be accepted by the Bids and Awards Committee. Only those that are eligible will be entitled to submit bids.
3. LOIs must be delivered by hand, through mail, or facsimile to the address below at 8:00a.m. to 5:00p.m. on or before January 04, 2008 .
4. The BAC shall draw up the list of eligible consultants from those who have submitted LOIs and have been determined as eligible both in accordance with the provisions of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184) and its Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A).
5. Eligible consultants shall be invited to participate in the bidding for this project through a Letter of Invitation to Bid issued by the BAC of the SSS.
6. Part II of the Bidding Documents shall be issued to eligible consultants from the address below upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of **P2,500.00**. The method of payment will be on a cash basis, payable at the SSS Cashiering Department, SSS Main Bldg., Ground Floor, upon accomplishment of SSS Form R6. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective consultant or his authorized representative.
7. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the IRR-A of R.A. 9184, and is restricted unless otherwise stated, to Filipino citizens or organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest belonging to citizens of the Philippines. Only bids from eligible consultants will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in the Eligibility Documents. In accordance with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184 the contract will only be awarded to the Highest Rated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during post-qualification.

   The SSS shall evaluate bids based on Quality-Cost Based Evaluation (QCBE) procedure using a 60%-40% technical and cost rating computation. The criteria and rating system for the evaluation of bids shall be provided in the Instructions to Bidders.

   Evaluation of technical proposals shall include a Proof of Concept (PoC) of bidder's proposed survey plan and methodology based on selected features and data to be provided by SSS for this purpose.
8. Interested consultants may obtain further information from SSS at the address given below from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
9. The contract shall be completed within one (1) year.
10. The *SSS* reserves the right to accept or reject any or all Bids without offering any reason, waive any formality or technicality, and to award to any bidder whose proposal is deemed most advantageous to the SSS. The SSS neither assumes any obligation for any loss whatsoever that may be incurred by the bidders in the preparation of their respective bids, nor does the SSS guarantee that an award will be made.

Bids and Awards Committee
The Secretariat
6th Floor, SSS Main Building
East Avenue, Diliman,Quezon City
Tel # 922-2991,924-7380, 920-6401 local 5491
Email – bac@sss.gov.ph
Facsimile number – (02) 924-7380

(Sgd.) **THE CHAIRMAN**
BIDS & AWARDS COMMITTEE

(PDI – Dec. 13, 2007)

Ateneo CCE, PRSP offer 1-day public relations course

THE ATENEO CENTER FOR CONTINuing Education, in collaboration with the Public Relations Society of the Philippines (PRSP), the premier organization of public relations professionals in the Philippines, is offering Maximizing Your PR Potentials on Dec. 17 at the Ateneo Salcedo Campus.

Maximizing Your PR Potentials is an introductory seminar that focuses on the fundamentals of public relations (PR) and how it supports the company's business goals and contributes to the bottom line. It was designed to provide participants an overview of the relevance and strategic value of the PR function in the organization, and also to encourage participants to use the varied tools of public relations to the company's advantage.

This one-day program will be conducted by longtime and credible practitioners Ritzi Villarico Ronquillo, APR, public relations officer and head of advertising and special events of Meralco and Judd Salas, corporate communications manager of Superferry (owned and operated by Aboitiz Transport System). The course will also have an open forum with notable practitioners as panelists: Butch Raquel, APR-corporate communications head of GMA Network 7; Jones Campos, APR-corporate communications head of Globe Telecom, and Dante Velasco, APR, chair and CEO of Creative Point International.

Give your team a better understanding of public relations and how it ultimately affects your organization. To register, call 840-1247 or 894-4868 and look for Ibsky Romero or Art Oledan.

MAYBANK BRANCH MAKEOVER CAMPAIGN GRAND WINNER

Student Eileen Lee of the Philippine School of Interior Design (PSID) is the grand winner of the recently concluded Branch Makeover Design Competition spearheaded by Maybank Philippines. Yee wins a cash prize plus the privilege of working on the actual renovation of a Maybank branch in accordance with her winning design. Inspired by a similar campaign launched by the Maybank head office in Kuala Lumpur last January 2007, this competition aims to tap into the creative minds of interior design students for a fresher, more stylish and highly space-efficient concept fit for the banking and financial services setting. Ultimately, the Branch Makeover Design Competition's objective is to delight the Maybank customer by enriching his retail banking experience through design and space innovations. Maybank Philippines is a member of the Maybank Group, Malaysia's largest banking group with over $60 billion in assets. Maybank is ranked among Asia's largest and strongest banks in 2007, according to Asian Banker, and was recently named as Malaysia's Most Valuable Brand for 2007. Shown with Lee, from left, are Deng Castro, PR/branding officer, Maybank; Susan Catindig, vice president and cluster head, Maybank; Richard Lim, vice president and head for retail marketing, Maybank; Enrique Jimenez, senior vice president and head for consumer business; and Glenn Garcia, product management officer, Maybank.

PCOs to assist in pollution control

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATUral Resources (DENR)-Environmental Management Bureau (NCR) and the Water Environment Association of the Philippines (WEAP) is conducting a "Basic Training Course for New Pollution Control Officers (PCOs)" from Dec. 11 to 14 at the Great Eastern Hotel, Quezon Avenue, Quezon City.

EMB (NCR) Director Ramon Aguilar who will spearhead the training, said the PCO will help the industries to improve their environmental management, pollution prevention and cleaner production.

The four-day seminar will orient prospective PCOs on the different environmental laws and their implementing rules and regulations, EMB policies and programs and PCO duties and responsibilities.

Participants will be accredited as pollution control officers. For inquiries, call engineer Ding Briones and Procy Quijano of DENR-EMB-NCR at 781-0482, 781-0485 or 781-0471, or call Cathy Baguisi and Nene Mendoza of WEAP secretariat at 371-9790 or 410-1119.

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National / Citizenship	Position
HUAWEI TECHNOLOGIES PHILIPPINES INC. 53/F PBCom Tower, Ayala Ave., Makati City	Qi Xia Chinese	IT Manager
DUZON PHILIPPINES CORPORATION 28/F Tower 2, Insular Life Bldg., Filinvest, Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Ja Whae Kang Korean	Graphic Designer
KAJIMA PHILIPPINES INCORPORATED 12/F 6788 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Tetsuya Sakaki Japanese	M & E Manager
NALA SPA 2/F Admin & Finance Bldg., Ma. Guerrero cor. J. Felipe, CCP Roxas Blvd., Pasay City	Changseop Kim Korean	Consultant
NALA SPA 2/F Admin & Finance Bldg., Ma. Guerrero cor. J. Felipe, CCP Roxas Blvd., Pasay City	Sung Sab So Korean	Consultant
SCANILO TRADING CORP. Rm. 309 Kim Sui Ching Bldg., 473 Sto. Cristo St., Binondo, Manila	Mingai Yang Chinese	Technical Supervisor
SCANILO TRADING CORP. Rm. 309 Kim Sui Ching Bldg., 473 Sto. Cristo St., Binondo, Manila	Caigong Li Chinese	Accounting Manager
PC LOVE TRADING CORPORATION Comm'l-B Visard Bldg., 21 Gil Puyat Ave., Palanan, Makati City	Kang Yeob Lee Korean	Finance Manager
WITH MAGIC TRAVEL & TOURS AGENCY, INC. 1505 Echelon Tower, 2021 A. Mabini St., Malate, Manila	Song Heon Heo Korean	Marketing Manager
HIAP HING ENTS 1141 P. Algue St., Tondo, Manila	Tianxiang Chen Chinese	Supervisor
SAMSUNG ELECTRONICS PHILIPPINES CORPORATION G/F Bonaventure Bldg., Ortigas Ave., Greenhills, San Juan City	Beom Hee Lee Korean	Treasurer and Director
D&T GLOBAL CORP. Unit 72 Richville Corporate Tower, Madrigal Business Park, Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Taejung Kim Korean	Manager for International Division
D&T GLOBAL CORP. Unit 72 Richville Corporate Tower, Madrigal Business Park, Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Tae Woo Lee Korean	General Manager
EEP PHONE ENGLISH SYSTEM, INC. 1040 EDSA Magallanes Village, Makati City	Jaehyeok Bae Korean	Finance Assistant
AZTERIZK CONSULTANTS INC. 19 A. Gumamela St., Clinicville BF Homes, Parañaque City	Mi Sun Lim (w/o Jung) Korean	Operation Manager
KOREAN AIRLINES CO. LTD. 124 G/F LPL Plaza Leviste St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Hee Man Lee Korean	Aircraft Maintenance Manager
YESON TRAVEL & TOURS SERVICES MANILA, INC. Rm 205 Strata 2000 Bldg., Ortigas Rd., Pasig City	Miin Choi Korean	General Manager
LECRAM GARMENTS MANUFACTURING CORP. 288 Escolta St., Sta. Cruz, Manila	Shaojun Hong Chinese	Assistant Marketing Officer
MIDOS COMPUTER SHOP INC. 533 Quirino Ave., cor. Kalig-bak Drive, Tambo, Parañaque City	Yon Gun Chung Korean	President/General Manager

If you have any information/objection to the above mentioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

RAYMUNDO G. AGRAVANTE
OIC, Regional Director

(PDI – December 13, 2007)

HALIKA! TO YOUR TV SCREENS

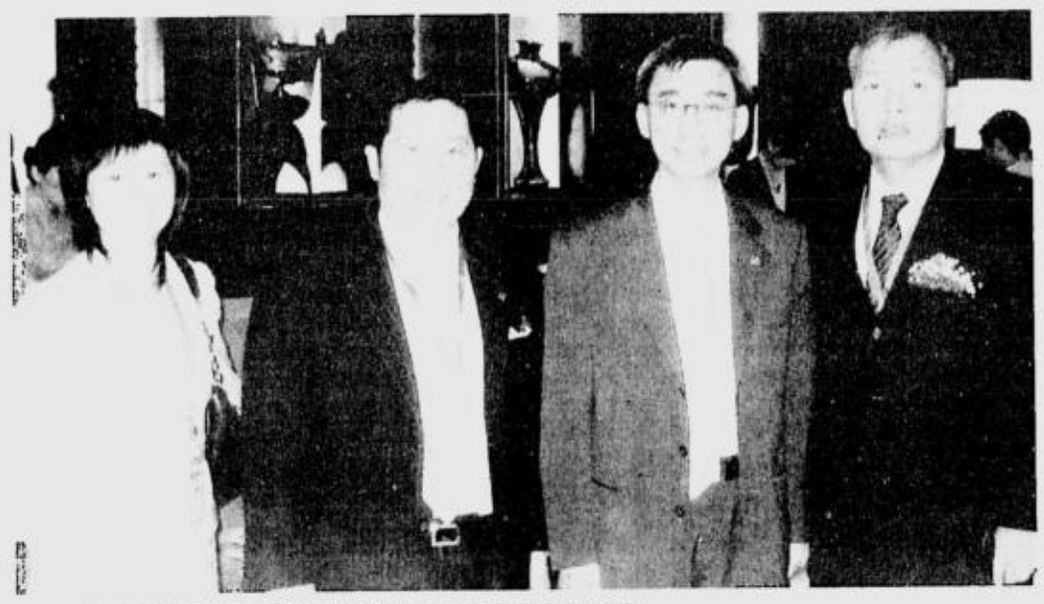
Fresh from a successful Halika! charity workout Nov. 11 at the Marikina Sports Complex, wherein every calorie burned by participants was converted into one peso by Coca-Cola and donated to charities Philippine Institute for the Deaf and The Philippine National Red Cross, 'Halika!' the show will be invading your TV screens too! Watch as 'Halika!' airs every Saturday, 9:30 a.m. on QTV Channel 11. 'Halika!' is a health and lifestyle show that will feature individuals who lead unhealthy lives. They will then be shown by health experts how to live healthy and active lifestyles—or HAL—through three key HAL values: eating a balanced diet, regular physical activity and proper hydration. You, too, can start living a healthy and active lifestyle. Don't miss 'Halika!' when it airs this Saturday. Halika! Mag-healthy and active living na!

CBC KALAW CELEBRATES 15TH ANNIVERSARY

China Bank Kalaw branch recently celebrated its 15th anniversary. With the bank's expanded services, the anniversary makes it even more worth celebrating as CBC partners with Manulife, one of the leading insurance companies in the world. The bancassurance joint venture allows the bank to offer a wide range of superior and innovative insurance products, giving China Bank the competitive edge of being a one-stop shop for banking and insurance needs. With two powerhouses on board, this bancassurance joint venture is poised to set a new standard of excellence in the country. Shown are branch manager Gloria Mañosca (middle, standing), Bryan Fabros Jr, branch operations manager (left, standing), Winston Tan, MCB area manager (back, partly hidden) and branch cashier Tess Panghulan (5th from left, standing). The bank is located at Maria Natividad Building, 470 TM Kalaw Corner Cortada Street, Ermita Manila. For more details, log on to www.chinabank.com.ph.

DTI-Ayala-Magsaysay business plan competition

THE SEARCH IS ON FOR THE "1ST BUSINESS Plan Competition For Young Entrepreneurs" jointly sponsored by the Ayala Foundation Inc (AFI), Department of Trade and Industry-National Capital Region (DTI-NCR), and the Office of Senator Ramon Magsaysay Jr. The competition aims to discover the potentials of NCR-based young entrepreneurs, 35 years and below with either start-up or existing, micro or medium scale agri-based business. Interested parties can call the DTI-Ayala-Magsaysay Business Competition Secretariat at 752-1185. Details of the competition mechanics and application forms are available at the secretariat office or at www.ayalafoundation.org, www.starfishmagazine.com, and www.dtincr.ph. Deadline for submission of entries is Dec. 19.



FIRST LIFE MEETS WITH PING AN OF CHINA

First Life president and CEO Peter Coyiuto (4th from left) recently attended a gathering of life insurance companies in Shanghai, China. Coyiuto met with Ping An's executive director and group president Louis Cheung. Shown are (from left) Ping An annuity chair and CEO Yongman Du, deputy manager Hong Juan, president Louis Cheung, and Coyiuto. Ping An Insurance is China's second largest insurance company.

Limited-edition Isuzu Crosswind XTi boasts 10 new features

ISUZU PHILIPPINES CORP IS ENDING ITS 10th anniversary on a high note. For the last quarter of the year, the diesel authority is selling limited-edition variants of the Crosswind XTi and Sportivo. And because 2007 marks the company's first decade in the country, the new Crosswind XTi LE has been given 10 new features that further make the best-selling Isuzu MPV an unbeatable proposition. This "Rated 10 Over 10" sales campaign runs from October to December only.

Of the 10 new features on the limited-edition Crosswind, five can easily be spotted outside. First is the new pair of circular fog lamps on the front bumper for better visibility in foggy conditions. The second feature consists of blackout pillars and doorframes, and a Limited Edition sticker on the C-pillars. Third, three backing-up sensors have been integrated into the rear bumper, significantly improving safety when reversing. The fourth exterior enhancement is a sporty rear spoiler with third brake light. The last, and the most prominent, are the new colors for the XTi LE: ebony black and crystal blue.

The remaining five new features can be found inside, where you will spend most of your motoring time getting pampered. First, the dashboard panels have been accented by silver, instantly making the overall look and feel of the cabin both classy and hip. Second, Isuzu has installed the Sony DV1000 single-disc in-dash DVD/CD/MP3 player for the improved aural pleasure of the passengers. The third interior feature is the perfect partner to the DVD player: two 7-inch headrest-mounted LCD monitors for the on-the-move entertainment of second- and third-row occupants.

Fourth, a new three-layer console box provides unparalleled storage convenience. Finally, a handsome combination of black sport jersey and vinyl now cover the seats, visually complemented by black floor carpets, seatbelts and trims.

"The new Crosswind LE is Isuzu's gift to our customers for supporting us all these past 10 years," said IPC president Keiji Takeda. "With 10 new features, this 'value-for-money' limited-edition Crosswind XTi should be very popular in the market during the closing months of the year."

Isuzu Philippines is also offering the Sportivo LE in special holiday colors of pearl white and tornade red.

The Crosswind LE, powered by a robust, fuel-efficient and environment-friendly 2.5-liter 4JA1-L direct-injection turbodiesel,

is priced at P1,070,000 for the Sportivo LE and P929,000 for the XTi LE.

Visit your nearest Isuzu dealership today as the Crosswind LE will only be available until December this year. With 10 new exterior and interior features, the XTi LE should be quickly snapped up by practical vehicle buyers who will find the vehicles' Isuzu heritage and value for money extremely difficult to resist.

In Metro Manila, Isuzu dealerships can be found in Edsa Balintawak, Quezon Avenue, Commonwealth, Pasig, Manila, Makati and Alabang. In the provinces, Isuzu dealerships are located in Isabela, Pangasinan, Cabanatuan, Pampanga, Bulacan, Cavite, Batangas, San Pablo, Bacolod, Iloilo, Mandaue, Cagayan de Oro and Davao.

CBI is one of the world's leading Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) companies specializing in lump-sum turnkey projects for customers that produce, process, store and distribute the world's natural resources.

Candidates are currently being sought for several key positions at various locations, throughout CBI's international operations.

Project Cost Engineers (Qatar, UAE, Angola and Saudi Arabia)

- Establish appropriate cost code structures, track budgeted items from estimation to execution / close-out phase utilizing trend / change management systems
- Prepare cash flows, cost of working capital, multiple currencies and hedging
- Prepare cost forecasts, staffing plans, contingency / gross margin analysis
- Report on project cost / commitment and financial status
- Prepare invoice validation / valuations, variation orders and back charges.

Project Planning Engineers (Qatar, UAE, Kuwait, Angola and Saudi Arabia)

- Manage multiple resource loaded project schedules with up to 5,000 activities
- Develop Level 1 - 4 schedules utilizing WBS / OBS
- Quantity tracking (engineering deliverables and installed commodities)
- Prepare critical path analysis, provide progress updates, validation & reporting
- Delay and schedule impact analysis and inputs into change management systems

Project Controls Managers (Qatar, UAE, Angola and Saudi Arabia)

- All of the above mentioned plus a minimum of 10 years hands-on Project Controls experience, with at least 2 years within a supervisory role
- Provide strong leadership and analytical skills

Company culture and work requirements will suit individuals who are achievement oriented, have good presentation skills, are self-starters, and capable of working effectively both independently and as a team member.

Please state in your application what location/s you are willing to work in. All positions are Single Status. Interviews of qualified and selected applicants will be held in Manila in January 08.

Qualified and interested applicants may apply personally with two (2) sets of bio-data, resume of work experience with detailed employment history and job description, recent photo, employment certifications and other supporting documents at:

PARMAN INCORPORTED
Personnel Department
7F MGF Champaca Building,156 Amorsolo Street
corner Pasay Road, Legaspi Village, Makati City
or email us at recruitment@parmaninc.com

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NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION
OF
AFX-ASIA PTE LIMITED

Notice is hereby given that the Directors of **AFX-ASIA PTE LIMITED** with Philippine registered office address at 5th Floor Kings Court II, Pasong Tamo cor. dela Rosa Street, Makati City resolved to dissolve and wind up its corporate affairs in accordance with law.

All persons having claims against said corporation are requested to present the same at the above-mentioned address or at the resident agent's address at 5th Floor Don Jacinto Building dela Rosa Cor. Salcedo Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City.

This announcement will serve as notice to all concerned of the legal dissolution of the aforesaid corporation.

(Sgd.) **WILLIE B. SANTIAGO**
Resident Agent

(PDI - Nov. 29, Dec. 6 & 13, 2007)

NATIONAL CLASSIFIEDS
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More Classified Ads:

Securities and Exchange Commission A19
DOLE-NCR B3
ZAMCELCO B5
Philippine Health Insurance B5
Social Security System B5

Bauan parols at CCP

IT ALL STARTED TWENTY-NINE YEARS (29) YEARS ago, when the faculty of Bauan High School (BHS) in Batangas, headed by Engr. Vicente Cordero, was alarmed by the increasing criminal activities involving teenagers in schools. The group devised a way to reactivate and re-introduce worthwhile activities for students to think, cooperate and develop their artistic abilities through the *Parulan* (lantern-making) contest.

Today, the BHS, a forerunner and pioneer in lantern-making, continues the said tradition by encouraging its students to use indigenous organic materials such as betel & *bunga* nuts, rice, corn husks, fish scales, citrus fruits, *pistachio* shells, cigarettes, garlic, matches, *guyabano* and *alibangbang* leaves, coconut tree, "*palotsina*" and "*alim*" wood, plastic strings and bottles, among others.

This year, 12 winning creations will be displayed at the Cultural Center of the Philippines' (CCP) Little Theater Lobby starting Dec. 18, during the "*Paskong Pinoy*" celebration at the CCP. The top three (3) lanterns crafted out of rice grains and hay, citrus fruits and garlic won the BHS Parol Festival this year.

Admission to the exhibit is free. For more information, call the CCP Visual Arts Division at tel. No. 832-1125 loc. 1504-1505.

ERRATUM

In the advertisement of Zamboanga City Electric Cooperative, Inc. Re: Invitation to Bid, published in the Classified Section of Philippine Daily Inquirer yesterday, December 12, 2007, the Agency Price should be **P29,000.00 per drum** instead of P29,000.00 per gram.

Our apologies.

Republika ng Pilipinas
Republic of the Philippines
KAGAWARAN NG EDUKASYON
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
PROCUREMENT SERVICE
Room 508, 5th Floor, Mabini Bldg., DepEd Complex, Meralco Ave., Pasig City

Telefax: 636-65-42
Direct Line: 666-65-43
Trunkline: 632-13-61 local 2115
Website: http://www.deped.gov.ph

2007 Call for Submission of Elementary Filipino Textbooks and Teacher's Manuals

The Department of Education (DepEd) is inviting interested publishers to submit copies of camera-ready materials for their textbooks (TXs) and accompanying teacher's manuals (TMs) for Filipino Grades 1 to 6 intended for use in public schools nationwide starting 2009-2010.

DepEd intends to buy the best sets of textbooks and teacher's manuals that pass content evaluation with a reasonable price offer for the copyright authorization fee to print and distribute to all public schools nationwide.

All submitted materials will undergo evaluation process in four areas;

- Area 1 to test completeness of coverage, organization and internal consistency;
- Area 2 to check accuracy of facts and information, integrity of concepts, and sequence of learning concepts.
- Area 3 to test the appropriateness of the language and visuals used; and
- Area 4 to ensure correct grammar and syntax and check the book design

Publishers will pay an evaluation fee of **forty thousand pesos (P40,000)** for each set of Grades 1 and 2 textbook and teacher's manual to be evaluated and **fifty thousand pesos (P50,000.00)** for each set of Grades 3 to 6 TX/TM. The evaluation fees, which will be used to defray expenses for service fees, transportation and board and lodging of evaluators, may be paid either in cash or manager's check payable to DepEd Trust Account for Textbook Evaluation (Account No. LBP 0672-1027-66).

Only sets of TXs / TMs that meet the cut-off score after undergoing content evaluation under the four areas will be considered for ranking. Publishers will be given a copy of the recommendation of the evaluators at the different areas which will serve as basis for revising the TXs / TMs prior to submission for bidding.

The materials for elementary Filipino Grades 1-6 must be submitted to the DepEd-Instructional Materials Council Secretariat (IMCS), 5th Floor, Mabini Building, DepEd Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City not later than **May 30, 2008.**

In order to get a soft copy of the Textbook Call Guidelines and learning competencies for elementary Filipino, bring a blank compact disk to the DepEd-Instructional Materials Council Secretariat (IMCS) starting **December 17, 2007.** All inquiries pertaining to this call may be addressed to DepEd-IMCS Evaluation and Training Division staff at tel. nos. (02) 634-1054 or 631-9294.

For your information and guidance.

(Sgd.) **TEODOSIO C. SANGIL, JR.**
Undersecretary and BAC Chairman

(PDI – December 13, 2007)

OBITUARIES

Manuel Antonio Escoda Roxas

After a long illness, ***Manoling*** *was united with his mother,* ***Ma. Teresa Escoda Roxas,*** *on December 12, 2007 at 3:20 in the morning.*

He is loved by his wife, **Marta Baquiran Roxas,** his children **Maia, Andy** and their mother, **Nanette Saenz,** his daughter **Alexandra**, his father **Sixto K. Roxas,** his brothers and sisters **Ming, Babu, Ching, Susan, Ditchay, Butch, Vinci** and **Iya,** and his mother-in-law **Zenaida Baquiran.**

You may join his family to bid farewell to **Manoling** at Christ the King Chapel A in Green Meadows.

OBITUARIES

Death Notice

(Ret.) Col. Mario T. Espiritu, MC
Died on December 11, 2007
His body lies in state on Rizal St., Lumban, Laguna.
Interment will be on December 15, 2007, 9:00 AM
at Lumban, Laguna

INQUIRER OBITUARIES

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:

❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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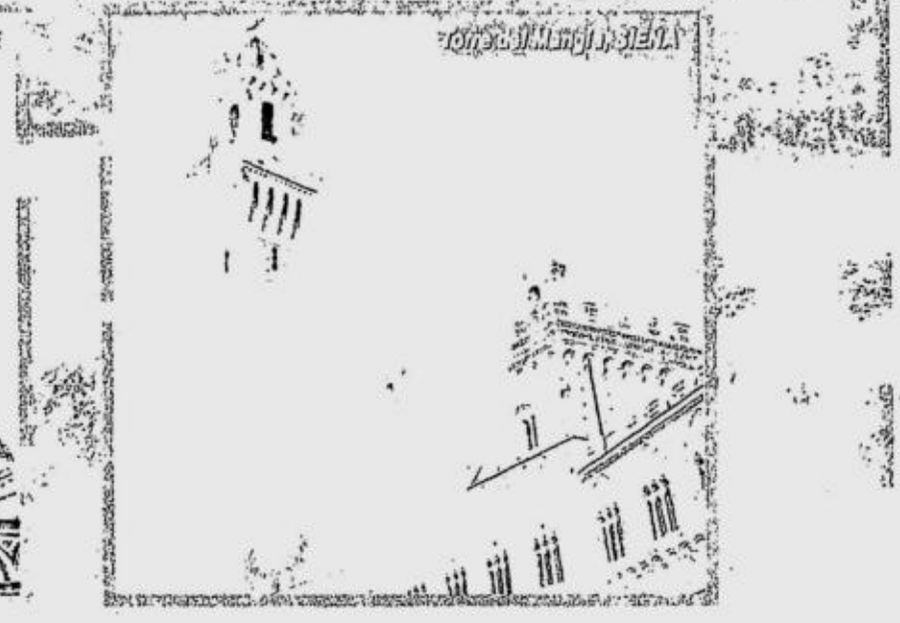

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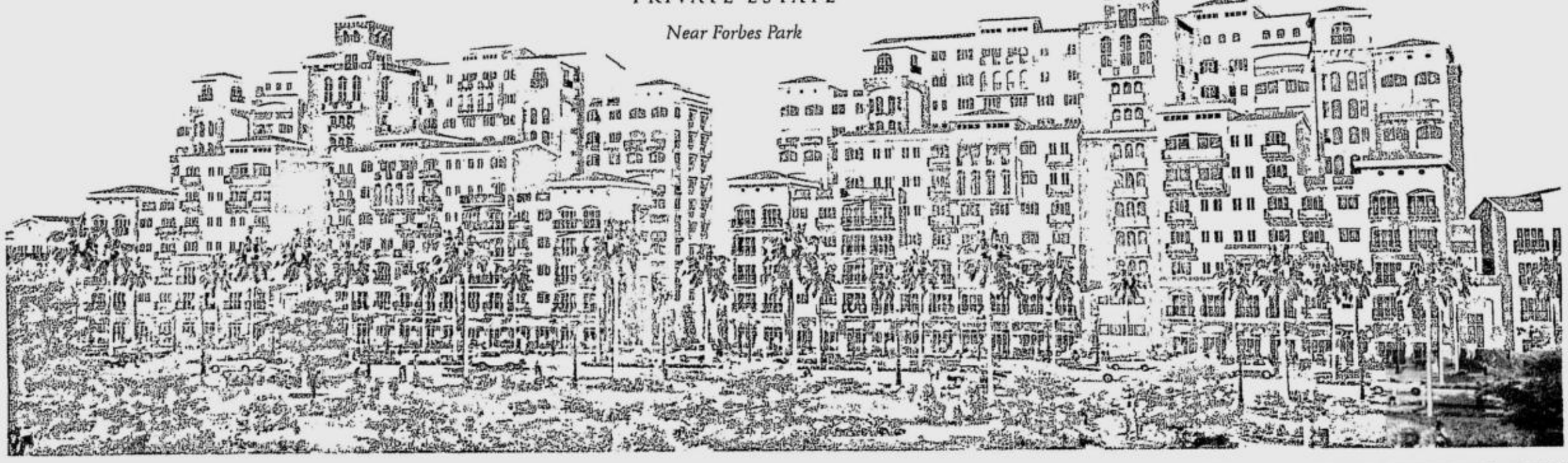

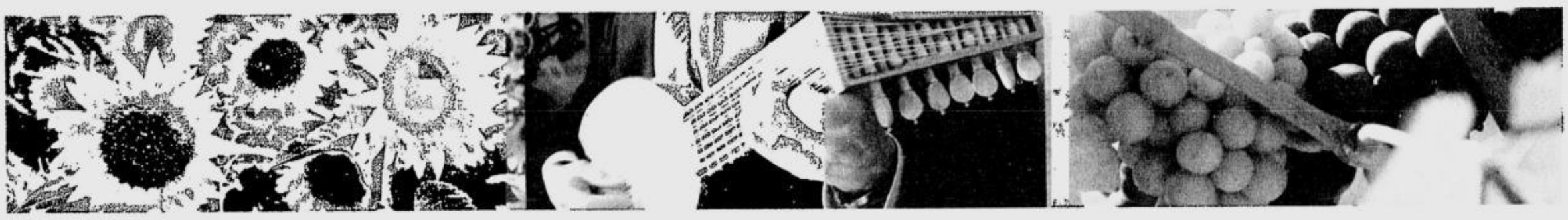

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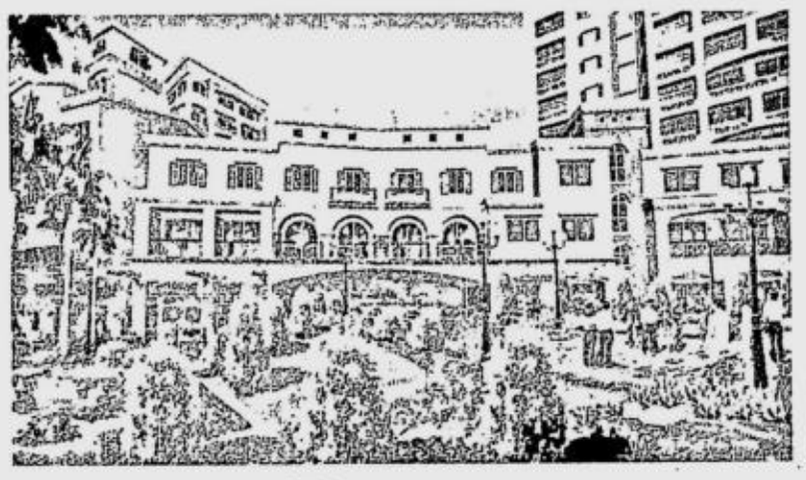

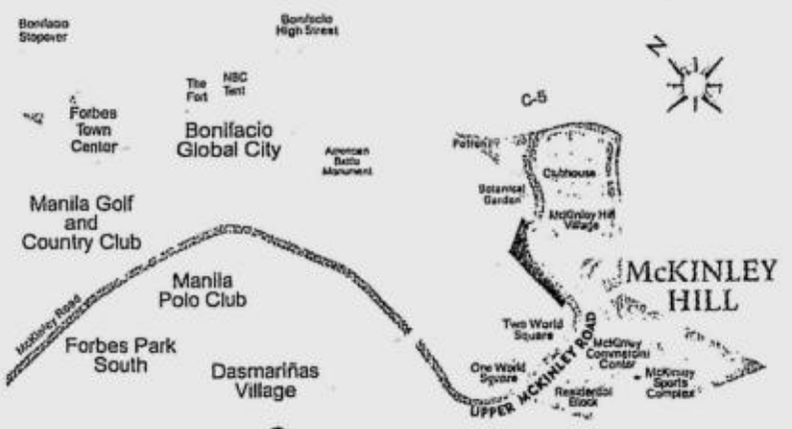

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LIFESTYLE

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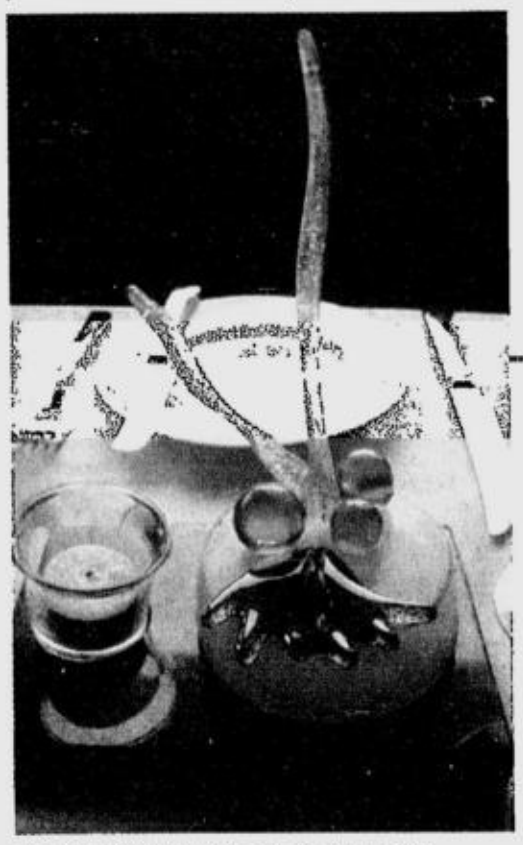
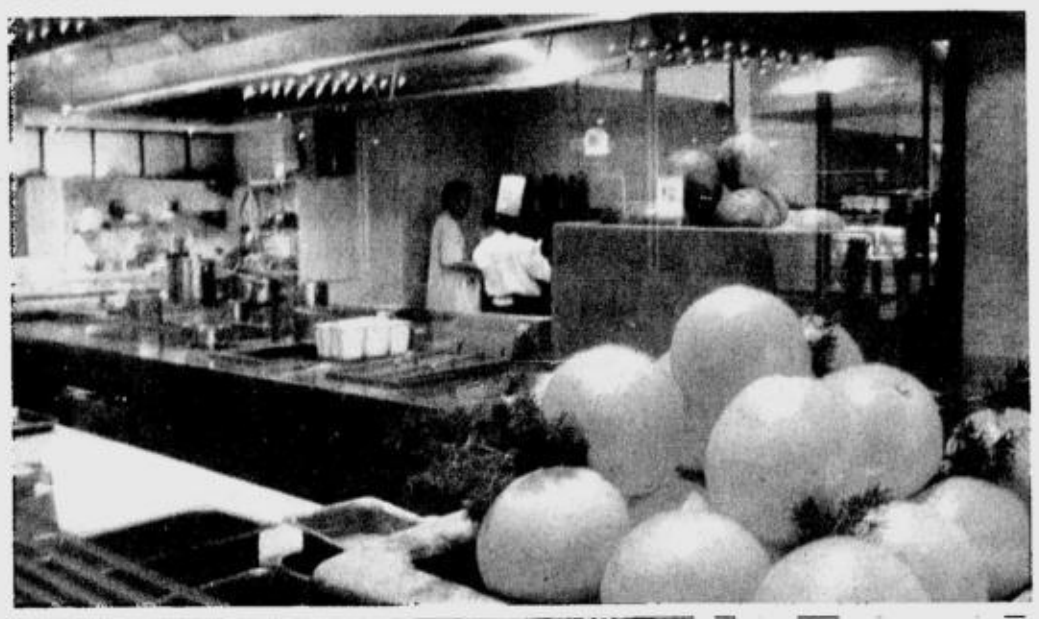
New owners for friendly Italian place /C5

Review: 2-star rating for Mamou /C6



AUBERGINE promises to be the next hippest, hottest dining destination in town.



KITCHEN RESCUE
Reggie Aspiras

Pigging out in a classy place

MANILA HAS NOT SEEN IN a long, long while a restaurant as pretty as Aubergine. Nothing, I mean nothing, was spared in creating its look!

To the left, as you enter, is a stylish bar. Behind it, a well stocked walk-in wine cellar. To your right is a patisserie with chillers and counters filled with freshly baked bread, delicious cookies, chocolates and cakes (many of which are packaged and would make excellent gifts. Their cinnamon stars are my favorite!).

Inevitably, you take sight of the dining tables decked in beautiful sugar sculptures in glass by Bobby Castillo. Standing alongside the sculptures are odd-shaped wine glasses one can use to toast to his/her heart's content, without worrying that it will chip or break.

Walking further into the room, one catches a glimpse of the largest state-of-the-art open kitchen that is as huge as the whole dining area. It has border lights that keep changing colors.

Making it in time for the season of feasts, Aubergine opened its doors last Monday with a totally irresistible spread. Samplings of what is on their menu were served: Baked Oysters in Champagne Sauce, Fresh Oysters with Condiments, Carpaccio of Australian Tenderloin with Parmesan Fondue & Truffle Oil, Tempura Fried Tuna Loin with Sesame Ginger Dip, Pan-roasted Fillet

PIGGING/ C2

CHEF Norbert Gandler and Hans Schallenberg of ISCAHM are the geniuses behind Aubergine.

GREENHILLS ELAN HOTEL SUITES
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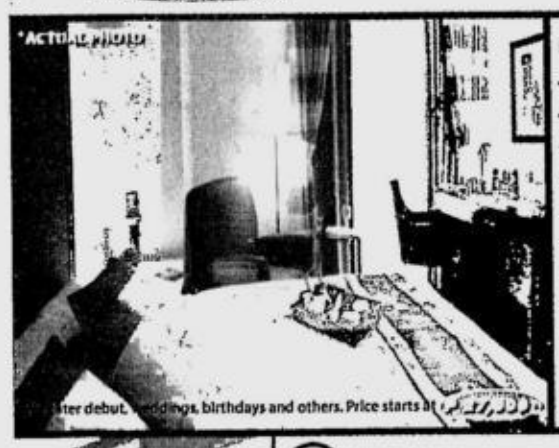

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COUNTRY COOKING
Micky Fenix

Food tour with Anthony Bourdain

THE FIRST BOOK OF CHEF ANTHONY Bourdain, "Kitchen Confidential," was fun to read. Irreverent, gossipy, frank.

It told us just what goes on beyond the swinging doors of restaurants.

Today, more restaurants have visible, glittering, clean kitchens. But you suspect there is a dirty kitchen at the back, the "culinary underbelly" as Bourdain calls it, where all the characters of his world must be yelling, smoking, burning themselves.

After "Kitchen Confidential," the chef went on to do a television series. Bourdain wrote that doing the series was going over "to the dark side." The reference to Star Wars was because he thrashed the first chefs on TV like Emeril Lagasse and Bobby Flay for "selling themselves" to the Food Network.

Bourdain wrote that the grind of day-to-day cooking was taking its toll on the Les Halles restaurant where he was executive chef. For him, doing a TV series is easier than cooking. How else can he travel the world, eat well and get paid for it?

Both the book and the 22-episode "A Cook's Tour" were successful and so a second TV series was made. "No Reservations" was aired on Discovery Travel and Living channels.

I watched his special episode on Ferran Adria, the wonder chef from Spain. Being a TV star chef allows one to get up close and personal with the subject matter.

But my friend who was lucky to get reservations at El Bulli, Adria's restaurant in Rosas, Spain, said any diner could talk to the chef, have pictures with and of him. The problem really is getting a reservation and going there.

Last week, I received a copy of one episode of No Reservations, Season 3 because the series will be airing Dec. 16 and every Sunday at 10 p.m. The episode is on Hong Kong, not the season opener which is a visit to Russia.

Maybe the channel figured Asians would find Hong Kong more interesting being more familiar with the food.

ANTHONY Bourdain walks the food trail with blogger John.

Anthony Bourdain is more relaxed by this fourth TV adventure series. And a lot more work is being done in the editing room because there are more special effects.

Not enough for an hour

Bourdain describes Hong Kong as "a lot of food in a little space." And all of it cannot be contained in a one-hour TV episode or even in a tourist's three-day, four-night stay.

But what Bourdain does show is good enough reason for me to go back and look for those places.

The problem is, where he is eating is not written down or is mentioned too quickly. I suppose we will just have to wait for the next Bourdain book. But that may be too late.

My travel mate in Vietnam looked for one restaurant Bourdain mentioned in his "Cook's Tour." It had closed by the time we got there.

The Hong Kong episode did bring back memories of my last stomach excursion in Hong Kong. Let me recall the food I had—finely done dim sum, tong shui or red beans soup, crispy toasted doughnut noodle roll, Shanghai hairy crab, wonton noodle, freshwater prawn with goose liver salad, pan-fried giant scallop al dente, cuttlefish with fried ginger, quick-fried fresh water shrimps, drunken pigeon, Tientsin cabbage with sliced ham, double boiled chicken soup with wonton, crunchy moist and fat-roasted goose, duck and pork.

My travel group had a guide from the Hong Kong Tourist Association who thankfully loved to eat and whose favorite song was Freddie Aguilar's "Anak."

Bourdain, on the other hand, was brought around by a blogger named John and a chef.

Food blogs are good sources of information on where to eat. Most often, the places are off the beaten track like a food court or known only to locals. The claypot rice with preserved meat was eaten at one sidewalk stall, the brisket noodle that made me hungry was from a hole-in-the-wall run by three brothers who were cooks by night and body builders by day. The blogger brought Bourdain to a noodle factory that is a one-man operation. The owner mixes his noodle batter using a bamboo pole that he rides like a seesaw.

The name of the place where the TV chef ate roasted pork, goose and duck was difficult to discern. Blame Bourdain for talking too fast.

At least I got the Dai Pai Dong, another food court on top of a wet market where beer was poured into bowls and the mantis prawn was great.

MY HONG Kong food view

A street scene which I found so very Hong Kong was a woman selling cooked pork intestines who was irritated by the film crew and refused to sell to the guide believing the American will not like it. Those of us who have been treated that way by vendors, waiters and even salespersons will roll their eyes in recollection.

I have always wondered if being rude is part of the culture. John, the blogger, clearly uneasy with his compatriot's attitude, told Bourdain the vendor "just doesn't care."

As added attraction, Bourdain does his own kung fu stunts a la Jackie Chan with the help of Chan's crew. He burnt some calories there but regained them during a meal with the crew later.

One thing certain, on my next trip I will try to find chef Alvin Leung, controversial Hong Kong chef of Bo Innovation. With his blue-streaked hair that he wears like a mop, dangling earrings, tattoo on his arms, and a lit tobacco, he certainly looks like the chef from hell.

He calls his cooking deconstructing Chinese food. Bourdain's description is "defiling the classics." On the whole, Bourdain thought it great eating and a great show in the spirit of chef Adria. He considers Bo Innovation the inevitable revolution against the traditional in this island eating place that is Hong Kong.

E-mail the author at pinoyfood04@yahoo.com

Promoting RP through coffee

TCP introduces world-class Coffee Alamid, one of the rarest types of coffee in the world.

TCP's Travel Shop answers questions, provides travel information and does actual bookings

TOURISM secretary Joseph "Ace" Durano with the TCP staff

THE FIRST-EVER TRAVEL-THEMED CAFÉ, Travel Café Philippines (TCP), will open on Dec. 18 in Greenbelt 5.

The pioneering "branding initiative" for tourism promotions of the Philippine Department of Tourism, offers a menu that takes diners on a "tour" of the country.

Coffee, for instance, is the organically Fair Trade Philippine coffee from Batangas, Bukidnon, Mount Matutum, and Cordillera Mountains.

TCP will also introduce one of the world's rarest and most expensive coffees, the Coffee Alamid (Philippine Civet Coffee).

The limited and exclusive selection of soups, salads, and full course meals and desserts also aims to give diners a tantalizing taste of Philippine cooking.

Making TCP totally unique is the Travel Shop providing personalized consultation and travel advice to customers. It answers questions, provides travel information and does actual bookings.

The TCP is designed to help create global awareness and recognition of the Philippine tourism "brand." Several TCPs are expected to open around the world through franchising.

The TCP concept was presented by Kazuyuki Goto of Travel Café Co., Ltd. (a company operating travel-themed cafes all over Japan) to the DOT. With the signing of a memorandum of agreement between DOT and Travel Café, the first Travel Café Philippines was established in Tokyo in 2006. The success of the first travel café encouraged Tourism Secretary Joseph "Ace" Durano to expand the TCP into a franchise business model.

Another prototype of TCP will be established in Greenbelt 5, Ayala Center in Makati and in SM Mall of Asia in Pasay City, with a satellite TCP in the SMX Convention and Exhibition Center in Pasay City.

Interior designer Budji Layug and architect Royal Pineda created a TCP design philosophy inspired by traditional Filipino craftsmanship. Three design elements were used—bamboo, weave, and the ancient Filipino calligraphy Baybayin.

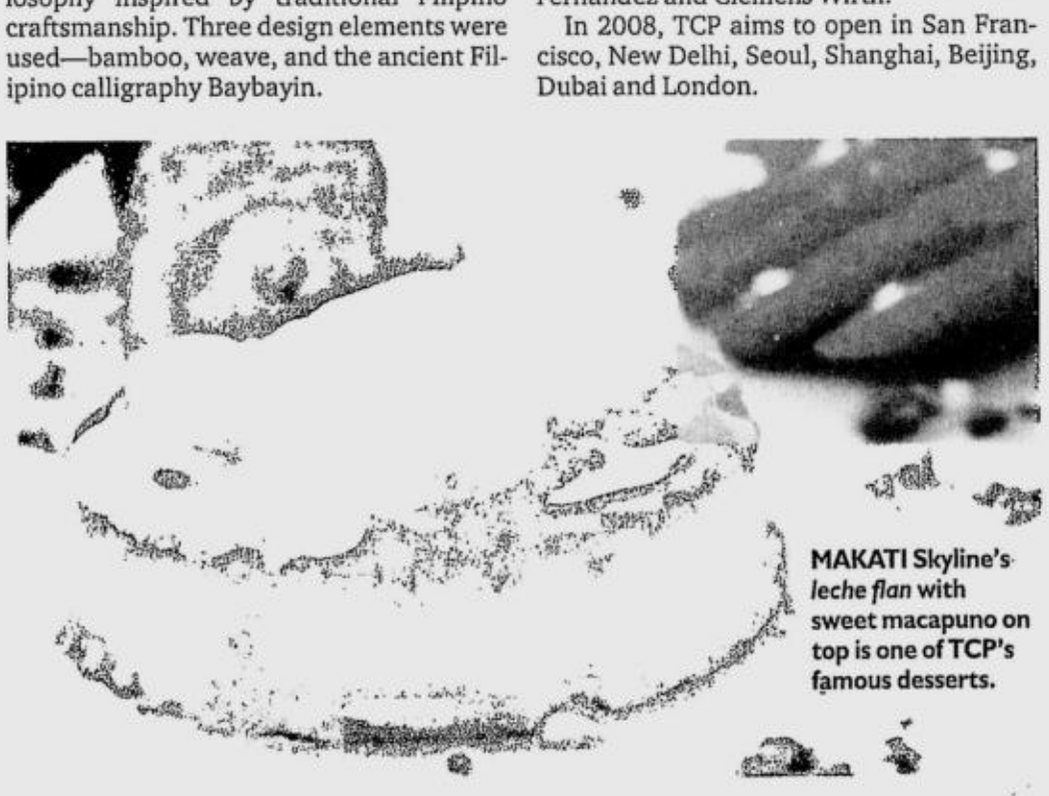
They aimed to transform traditional Philippine materials into uniquely modern designs, combining form and function.

The design philosophy also guided other elements like the menu, décor, merchandise, etc.

Makati Skyline Inc. was commissioned to draw up the signature menu.

Dinner and table ware were specially made by ceramic artists like Lanelle Abueva Fernandez and Clemens Wirth.

In 2008, TCP aims to open in San Francisco, New Delhi, Seoul, Shanghai, Beijing, Dubai and London.



MAKATI Skyline's *leche flan* with sweet macapuno on top is one of TCP's famous desserts.

Pigging out . . .

From page C1

of Norwegian Salmon with Hazelnut Infused Olive Oil, Grilled Fillet of Chilean Sea Bass with Bouillabaisse Fizz, Forest Mushroom Risotto with Green Asparagus on Parmesan Crisp, etc., etc., etc...

To name them all would exceed the space allotted to this column. Oh, their Caesar Salad with Cointreau-infused Gravlax is so yummy, too!

Had my mother seen the way I ate that evening, she would have been so displeased! Like a pig, in such a classy place! Tsk! Tsk! Tsk! *Dyahe*!

Perfection is something I expect from the men behind Aubergine. I congratulate and thank Norbert and Hans for giving us the gift of sublime food, the best of hand-picked wines and for making sure that all these are enjoyed in an environment so captivating.

Indeed, a perfect venue to toast the holidays happily and to usher in the year to come!

Aubergine, 2/F, 32nd and 5th Bldg., 5th Ave. cor. 32nd St., The Fort Taguig, tel. 8569888

Kebab breakfast?

After decadence, my palate shifts to everyday food.

Imagine a plate filled with Mediterranean kebabs of tenderloin, chicken and lamb, exquisitely seasoned, grilled till perfectly juicy, served with sides of fresh tomatoes, onions and bell peppers and two cups full of the most flavorful clove infused rice that is to die for.

Enjoy it with a dollop of sour cream and a sprinkling of mixed aromatic spices that works like "magic dust," as a friend puts it, that gives an already magical dish an even deeper, more delicious dimension! Super *sarap*!

The thought of it alone leaves me salivating and wanting more!

While you are there, try their *baba ganoush* for starters and finish with a cup of coffee. I have never seen coffee served with such panache, not even in the best of dining places!

SALT & PEPPER's Excellent Mixed Kebabs

I am happy to inform you that you could have their kebabs even for breakfast! Now how's that to start your morning?

Salt & Pepper, G/F Security Land Bldg., 6797 Ayala Ave. cor. VA Rufino, Makati City, tel. 8404848

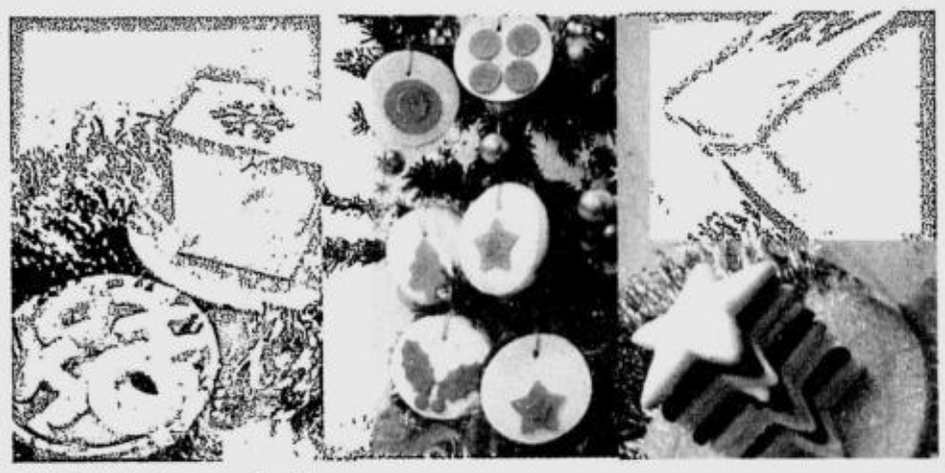
Feel young

Think of treats that you will be so happy to look at, that looking at them makes you feel like a child over again!

Gel Colet and her couture cookies have just that effect on me. She has all sorts of sugar cookies in all shapes, colors and sizes. You can even hang her cookies as trimmings on your tree! Really cute!

Here is a baker who is starting out, just as you requested. Better order this year. Remember, the prize of success is price increase! Hahaha! Call 0917-5367827 or 9327074.

E-mail the author at raspiras@inquirer.com.ph



GEL Colet's Couture Cookies

High financial and environmental price of bottled water

By Linda B. Bolido

IT IS BACK TO THE TAP FOR MORE AND more people around the world.

Janet Larsen, in a story released by the Washington DC-based Earth Policy Institute, reported, "From San Francisco to New York to Paris, city governments, high-class restaurants, schools, and religious groups are ditching bottled water in favor of what comes out of the faucet."

She said these people were "no longer content to pay 1,000 times as much for bottled water, a product no better than water from the tap."

In a conference of mayors of some 1,100 American cities, Larsen said the local executives noted the irony of purchasing bottled water for their employees and for official functions while at the same time touting the quality of municipal water.

A resolution sponsored by Mayors Gavin Newsom of San Francisco, Rocky Anderson of Salt Lake City, and R.T. Rybak of Minneapolis called for the examination of bottled water's environmental impact.

Restricted

Other American cities, Larsen said, had already taken action to reduce consumption of bottled water. Los Angeles, she reported, restricted the purchase of bottled water with city funds since 1987.

She added, "By the end of 2007, purchasing bottled water will be off-limits for San Francisco's departments and agencies, saving a half-million dollars each year and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. St. Louis is poised to ban bottled water purchases for city employees in early 2008."

Anderson, in a recent speech, called attention to the "total absurdity and irresponsibility, both economic and environmental, of purchasing and using bottled water when we have perfectly good and safe municipal sources of tap water." He urged city government departments and restaurants to stop buying bottled water.

"In November, the city council of Chicago, beleaguered by swelling landfills and a stretched budget, placed a landmark tax of 5¢ on every bottle of water sold in the city in order to discourage consumption," Larsen said.

She pointed out, "With 86 percent of used water bottles in the United States ending up as garbage or litter instead of being recycled, switching from the bottle to the tap helps to alleviate the trash burden."

Larsen said more than a quarter of bottled water was just processed tap water.

People no longer want to pay 1,000 times as much for a product that's no better than what comes from the tap

Wasteful

While tap water was delivered through an energy-efficient infrastructure, Larsen said "bottled water is an incredibly wasteful product. It is usually packaged in single-serving plastic bottles made with fossil fuels.

"Just manufacturing the 29 billion plastic bottles used for water in the United States each year requires the equivalent of more than 17 million barrels of crude oil," she pointed out.

Of course, since the water has to be transported from producer to retailer, the total energy consumption soars further.

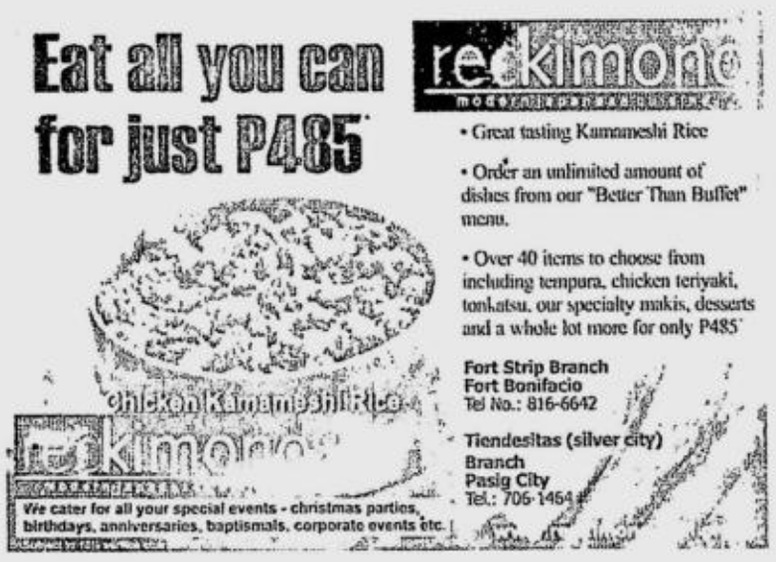
Larsen said, "The United Church of Canada is one of the religious groups abandoning bottled water for moral reasons. The Berkeley school district no longer offers bottled water. And after watching 3,000 empty bottles pile up each week, the Nashville law firm Bass, Berry, & Sims has stopped stocking bottled water."

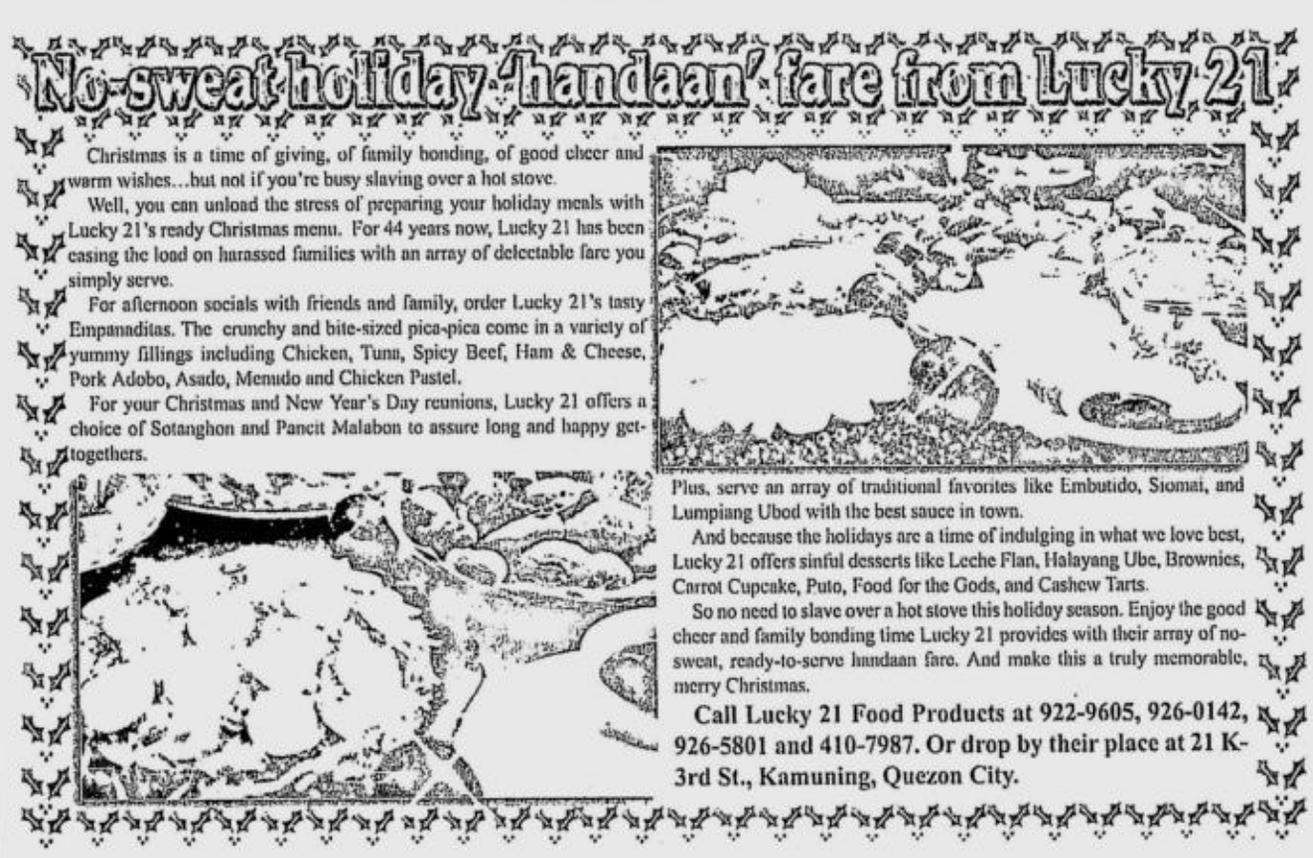
Even in Europe, where consumption of bottled water per person was highest, Larsen said "the bottle is starting to lose clout."

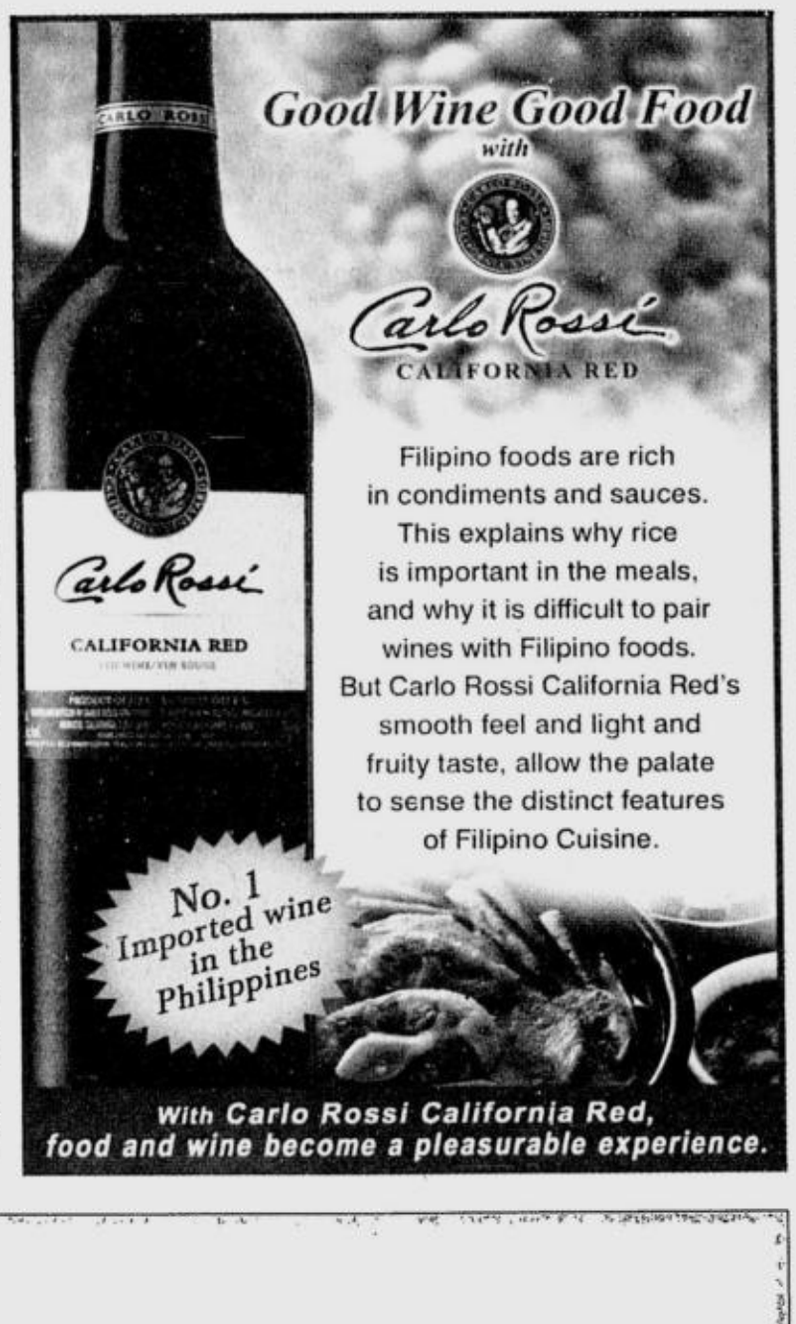
Two major Italian cities, the capital Rome and Florence, now promote city water. In the United Kingdom, the Treasury and the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs no longer offer bottled water at official functions. Sales in Scandinavia are falling because of environmental concerns.

"Even France, home to Evian, is seeing a sales slowdown," Larsen said.

Admittedly, there are areas in the Philippines where water is suspect. But Larsen said the $100 billion the world spent on bottled water every year could be put to better use creating and maintaining safe public water infrastructure everywhere, particularly to provide clean and safe water for the more than one billion people around the globe who did not have access to such.







The happiest parties happen at Jollibee

What makes the happiest and most memorable kiddie party ever? If you ask the celebrants, all they really want are delicious food, the most fun party theme, games, and of course, the chance to spend their birthday with Jollibee!

Take it from the kids of actress Sherilyn Reyes and former basketball player Chris Tan. The celebrity couple opted to hold a joint Jollibee Kids Party for their sons Quirsten's and Paoie's fifth and ninth birthday celebrations.

Like most children, Quirsten and Paoie couldn't get enough of Jollibee who delightfully played and danced on their big day. They also enjoyed sharing their *langhap-sarap* favorites with family and friends.

A great time for all is guaranteed by a Jollibee Kids Party

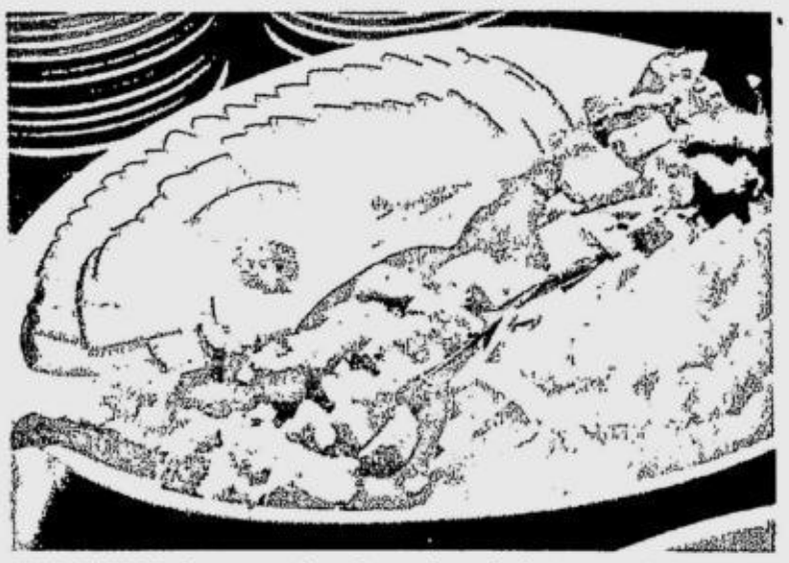
Leaving all the preparations to kiddie party authority Jollibee, even Sherilyn and Chris were able to fully enjoy their sons' big bash. Apart from providing food and the party venues that accommodates lively and energetic children, Jollibee Kids' Party takes care of all the other details-including invitations, guestbook, party favors, game prizes, theme decoration, balloons, games, birthday cake, and event the party host. There is also a Mix-N-Match Package for those who want a more customized menu. Parents can pick from three exciting Jollibee Kids' Party to suit their kid's preference-Circus Party, Treasure Adventure, and Zoo Party. There are also promotional themes such as Bratz and Justice League, which proved perfect for Sherilyn's and Chris' young boys. Fun and affordable, Jollibee Kids' Parties help parents focus on the things that really matter on their child's special day.

Sherilyn Reyes and Chris Tan with kids Quirsten and Paoie: Happy family pictures at Jollibee Kids Parties

Filled with fun, *langhap-sarap* food, and with each a unique party experience, Jollibee Kids' Parties is the best pick for the happiest celebration that everyone will remember. Go to your nearest Jollibee Kids Party store now! Sa Jollibee, dito p*inaka-happy ang* Party!

XANDRA Cachó's Pimientos del Piquillo Rellenos de Setas Silvestres or Piquillo peppers stuffed with wild mushrooms

HEAD of the *cuchinillo* (suckling pig)



THE CHEESE platter consists of *manchego de 4 años curado al romero* (center), *murcia al vino* (left) and *cabra al pimenton*.

On the Spanish gastronomic route

Six top chefs work together to present an evening of creative cooking

Text by Linda B. Bolido
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan

IT WAS AN EVENING OF INNOVATION and invention.

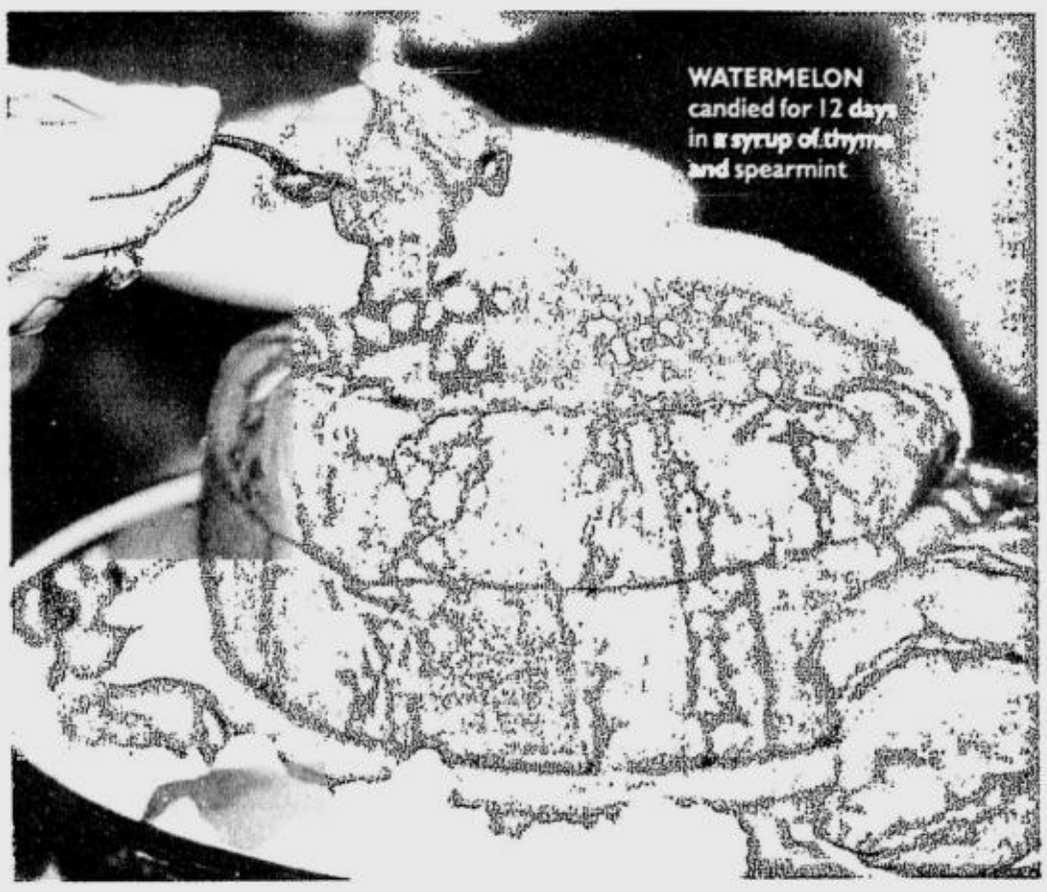
For the finale of the yearend culinary event of La Camara Oficial Española de Comercio, Industria y Navegacion, six of the country's top chefs, experts in Spanish cuisine, got together to prepare a spread of about 20 *tapas* (literally snack items).

It was truly a Noche de Creaciones, or Evening of Creations, at the banquet hall of Circulo Restaurant at the second floor of the Milky Way building on A. Arnaiz Avenue in Makati City.

The six culinary masters were J. Gamboa, the evening's "host" being the executive chef of Circulo and Milky Way restaurants; Mikel Arriet of Punta Fuego; Xandra Got-Cacho, Gaudi restaurant chef-owner; Reggie Aspiras, INQUIRER columnist; Juan Carlos de Terry of Terry Selection and Terry's Bistro in Makati; and Ariel Manuel, chef-owner of Lolo Dad's Café.

The event, which also served as the Christmas party of the La Camara's members and their families, capped La Ruta Gastronomica de España, a trio of dinners held between September and November that showcased the distinctive tastes of three Spanish regions.

CHEF Juan Carlos de Terry serves Jamon Teruel DO (Determinacion Origen)



CHEFS and officers of La Camara hold the check donation for the culinary training of Les Toques Blanches: Jun Santos, Cacho, Mikel Arriet, De Terry, J Gamboa, Alfredo Roca and Jose Luis Romero-Salas

MAMIA de hongos

Gamboa and Arriet combined their skills to present Noche de Pais Vasco, a feast of Basque dishes.

The two women chefs, Cacho and Aspiras, presented the flavors of Andalucia in La Noche de Andalucia.

Terry and Manuel paired up to bring Sabores de la España Mediterránea or Flavors of the Spanish Mediterranean Coast.

All these distinctive flavors were then brought together for the culminating event.

Using only original Spanish ingredients and condiments, the chefs presented a festival of unique flavors, offering guests new takes on familiar ingredients.

Cacho, for instance, completely "transformed" *bacalao*. Wrapping it in a pastry sack and serving it on a Chinese soup spoon, Saquitos Rellenos de Bacalao looked almost like dim sum.

Terry, proclaiming that the Filipino goat was the best, came up with Rocinando por la Mancha. Slices of eggplants were topped with ground goat meat, among others.

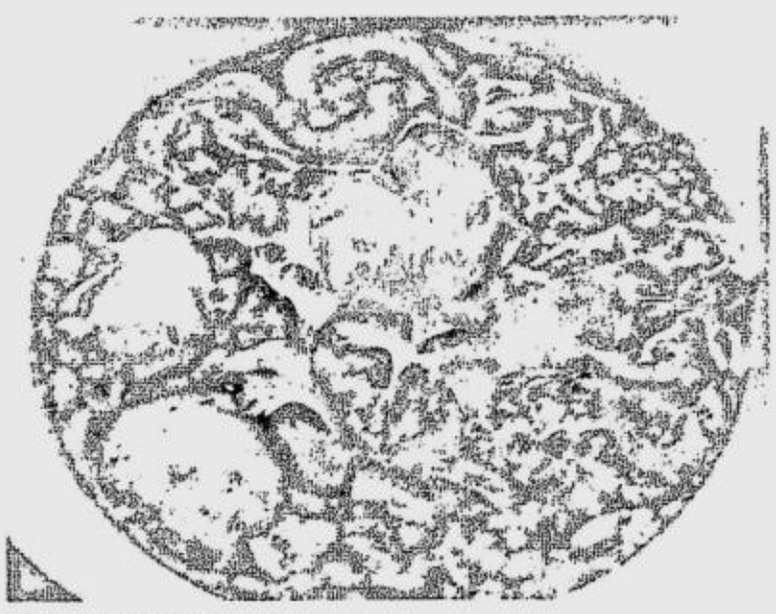
All the other stuff one associates with Spain, the hams, cheeses and wines, were all accounted for, naturally.

Just as naturally, the centerpieces of the spread were the Cochinillo Asado Navideño (*lechon de leche* to Pinoys) and Arroz a la Montaña, paella with a big difference—it was all vegetables.

DINING OUT

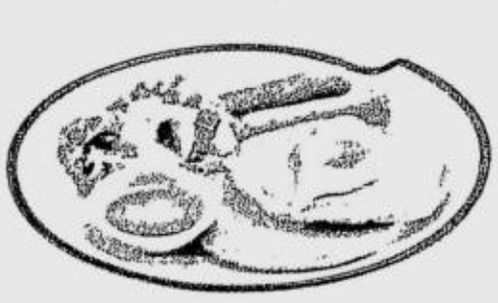
A taste of Thailand

OODY'S HAS BECOME THE PLACE TO GO for dishes that are authentic Thai at affordable prices. It offers an extensive menu that features different rice and noodle dishes, as well as soups, salads and desserts that come in generous servings. Bestsellers include Fried Spring Rolls with carrot sauce for appetizer, Crispy Catfish Salad with Mango, Pad Thai Noodles, Tom Yam Soup, Sukho Thai Soup, Bagoong Rice, Thai Kangkong and Chicken Pandan. Finish your meal with the special Thai *halo-halo* and drinks like Thai iced tea and Thai iced coffee. Oody's is at Greenbelt 3; 2/L, Robinson's Galleria; 2/L, Glorietta 1; 2/L, Market Market; and 2/L, SM City North Edsa. Call 7574259 or 9111584.



OODY'S Sukhothai soup

SUGARNOT, a specialty deli, coffee shop and bakeshop recently teamed up with Glucerna SR, a product of Abbot Laboratories, a low-calorie diabetes nutrition formula, for a new range of all-day breakfast dishes. The all-day breakfast fare developed by chef Willie Domingo includes Eggs Benedict with Blueberry Muffins, poached eggs on toasted, low-fat and low-carb blueberry muffins served with sausages and Glucerna SR pesto dressing. The Weight Watcher's Delight is egg-white omelet with sun-kissed tomatoes and grilled chicken julienne strips drizzled with Glucerna SR pesto sauce. Sugarnot branches are at The Podium, SM The Block, Westgate Alabang, SM Megamall and South Super Highway, Makati. Call 8893427 or 8435197; visit www.sugarnot.com.ph.



SUPREME Sugarnot Pancakes are wholewheat pancakes with Glucerna SR's special blend, served with Torani syrup and banger sausages.

THE HERITAGE HOTEL MANILA'S Riviera Café offers international buffet featuring Santa's favorite sweets this holiday until Jan. 6, 2008, for P1,088 per person (except on special dates). Stuffed Roast Turkey with Cranberry Sauce, Honey Glazed Ham and Roast Rib-eye with Red Wine Sauce are also available. Call 8548888.

FISH & CO. introduces new dishes dubbed "Island Spice," the restaurant's own versions of hometown Asian favorites. It includes Baked Seabass, Seafood Paella, Hainanese Style Chicken and Seafood Curry. Fish & Co branches are at Greenbelt 3, Shangri-La Edsa Mall and SM Mall of Asia.

CELEBRATE Christmas with Heaven N' Eggs and Cocorama's Christmas treats—Christmas Omelet, Simbang Gabi Special Putobungbong Pancake and the Dec. 26 Platter. Also available are the Rudolph's Pancake, Fruit Salad Waffle and Grilled Ensaymada Sandwich.

CLAWDADDY Crab House and American Grill presents all-time favorites Baby Back Ribs and the Clawdaddy's King Sampler (all-American BBQ feast). Other dishes include Jambalaya and Crab Skillet, Jambalaya and Ribs Skillet, Vietnamese-style Grilled Lobster, Lemon Cream Mussels and the Riverboat Shrimps. There's Clawdaddy Family Seafood Feasts and Crab and Lobster Boil and the Cajun Seafood Basket. Call 6365679 or 8564785.

The secret revealed

DISCOVER THE BEST DINING PLACES IN the metropolis with "Manila's Best Kept Restaurant Secrets," a 260-page hardbound book.

It lists restaurants with authentic cuisine, excellent service, and great ambience.

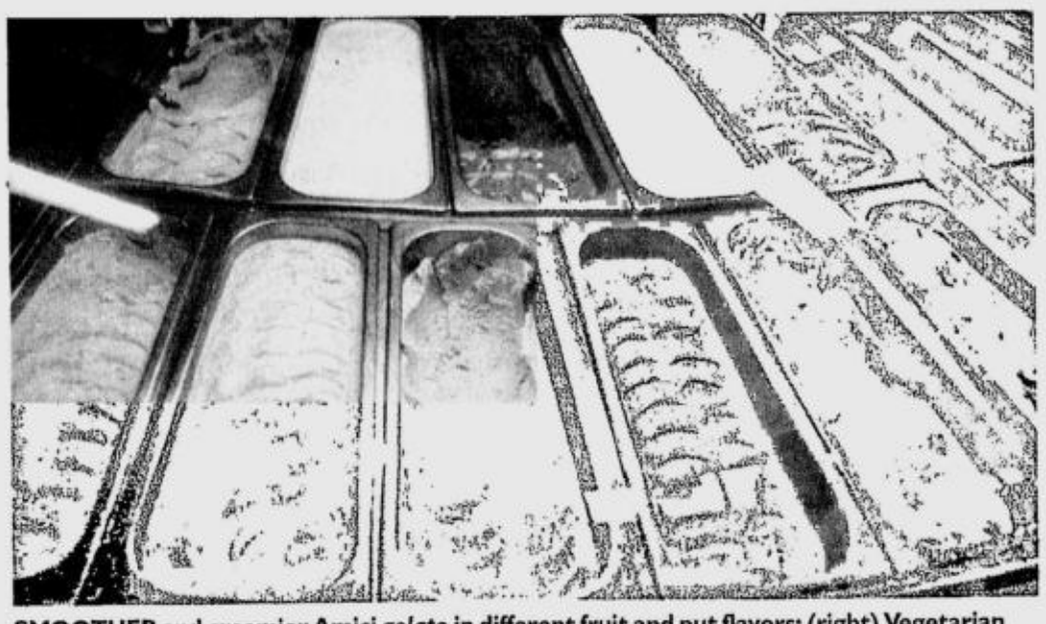
Authors Ines Cabarrus and Elian Habayeb will be at PowerBooks Live!, Greenbelt 4, Dec. 16, 4 p.m., for a special talk and book-signing session. Guests will hear about their gastronomic journey through Manila's best restaurants.

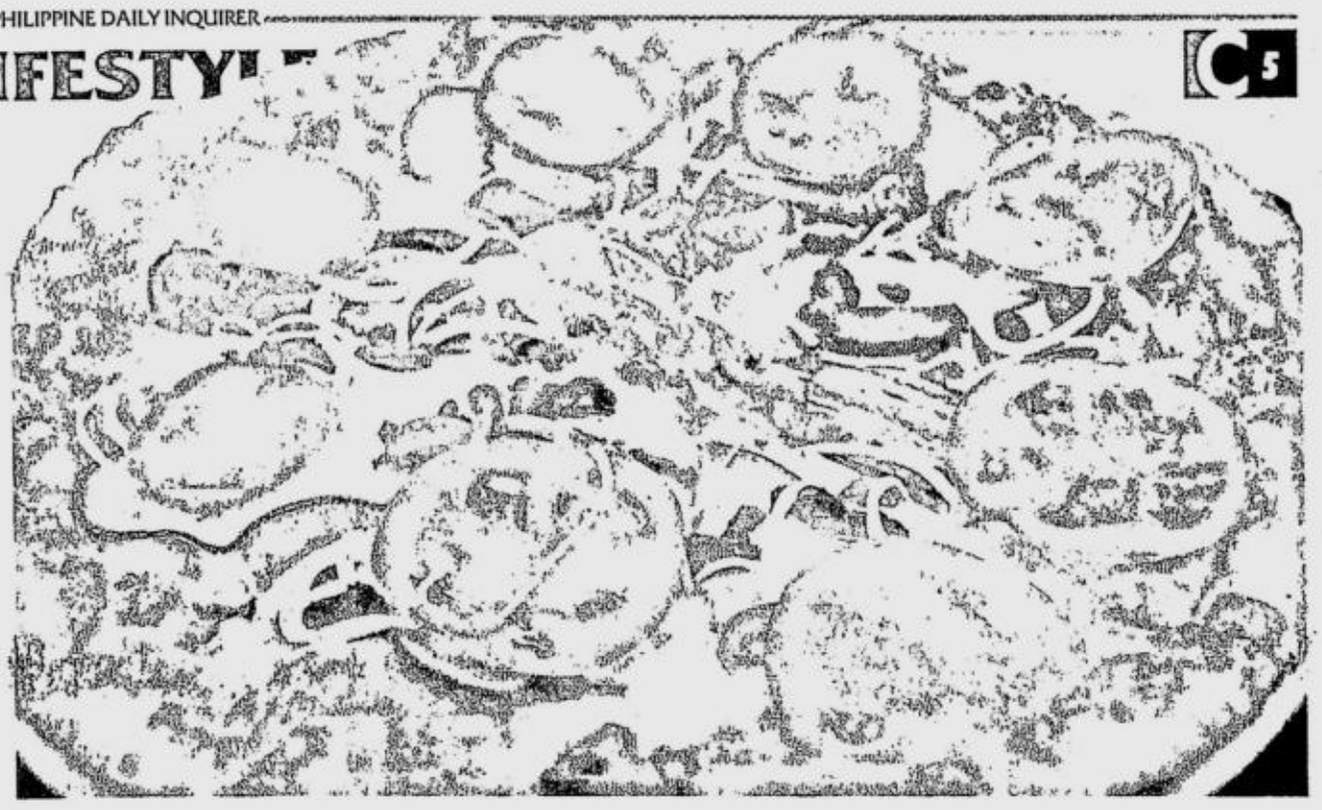
The writers worked for over a year and came out with a chronicle of photographs and stories of the restaurants, their food and the people behind them.

Cabarrus and Habayeb sought to bring back "destination dining," make eating a real adventure once again, with diners seeking out a particular place or a special dish.

Both tourists and locals will likely find the coffee-table book an interesting read though it is not a strict guide nor does it rate the restaurants.

It is simply a tasteful collage of places the two people who love to dine out have found fascinating. "We want our readers to explore the book from cover to cover, and experience, in some way, the same journey that we took to discover all of these wonderful places," says Cabarrus.





SMOOTHER and creamier Amici *gelato* in different fruit and nut flavors; (right) Vegetarian Pizza with zucchini, eggplant, bell pepper and fresh tomatoes

Italian restaurant becomes 'secular'

Text by Vangie Baga-Reyes
Photos by Ryan Lim

DIVINE INTERVENTION may have caused the smooth and easy transition of Amici ownership from a religious community to a private firm.

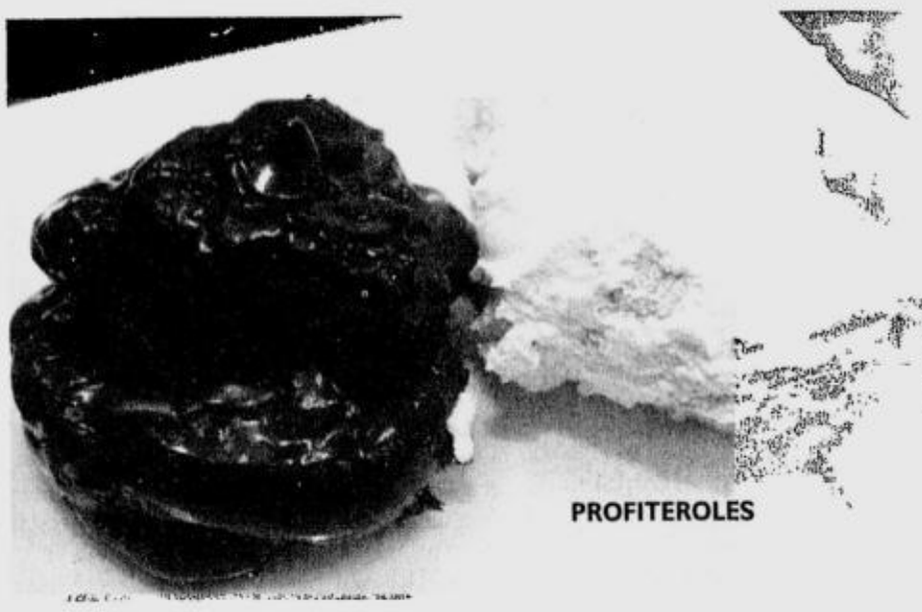
As any true-blue foodie knows, Amici di Don Bosco on Arnaiz Street (formerly Pasay Road) in Makati is the famed Italian restaurant run by Salesian priests that serves authentic Italian dishes, as well as the famed *gelato* (ice cream).

Despite its simple, cafeteria-like atmosphere, pizza lovers kept coming back for the Four Seasons pizza with toppings of mozzarella cheese, ham, mushrooms, artichokes and olives, and the Quattro Formaggi (four-cheese).

The pastas, freshly made every day, were major crowd-drawers.

Word of mouth brought more and more new clients that the restaurant expanded its dining area, adding a new wing near the Don Bosco printing plant's parking area close to the Pasay Road corner.

Salesian priests put up Amici di Don Bosco (Italian for Friends of Don Bosco) as a canteen for its employees. One of the priests, Fr. Gianluigi Colombo, a trained chef, started concocting *gelato*.



PROFITEROLES

Over talks about football, a deal was sealed transferring ownership of Amici

Later on, he added pizza and pasta dishes to the usual fare of Filipino dishes. After the cafeteria was opened to the public, the Italian dishes and the *gelato* were instant hits.

Last year, Danny Moran, who just sold his Red Ribbon Bakeshop after 26 years to Jollibee Corp., was looking for a new business, particularly involving ice cream that usually goes with cakes.

Lunching at Amici di Don Bosco with good friend Wilfrido "Iboy" Pinga, Moran tried the famed *gelato*. By the time they finished their meal, Moran knew he wanted to acquire the place.

Right time

"The priests were not actually thinking of selling the place," Moran said. "We just [came] at the right time."

Pinga said, "We had lunch with Fr. Francis Gustilo, who was in charge of the restaurant. At first, he was discouraging us... He even said, 'You know, *mahirap kaming kausap mga pari*. You have to deal with the whole community of priests.'"

Moran and Pinga did, sitting down with the whole council of Salesian priests. But, instead of business, discussion revolved around sports.

"Most of the priests in the council, including Father Francis, were football players. I even used to play against them," Moran, a member of the Philippine football team in the '70s, said.

"So, it was football first before business," he said.

After one more meeting, the deal was finalized.

"From the very beginning, the priests recognized that this was not their mission—to run a restaurant... They just wanted to make sure we were the kind of people who would take good care of the business," said Moran, who took over the business on June 1.

"Call it divine intervention. There were a lot of prayers [during] the negotiations," Pinga said.

The only condition the priests set was for the new owners to absorb the employees.

"When we took over, they had about 36 employees. We absorbed everyone and added a few more," said Moran, president of Amici Foodservice Ventures.

Streamlined

Moran's group decided to call the place simply Amici. New departments were created like research and development. The organizational structure from the production group to dining, customer service and food-handling procedure were streamlined. Sanitation, hygiene and quality control were given closer attention.

But the Amici that loyal patrons know remains—self-service, family-oriented and casual in terms of food presentation. It also promises value for money.

Moran said they kept the things that worked well before. "We only try to enhance or improve the existing operation."

Food servings remain generous. For authenticity, most of the ingredients are imported, including tomatoes, pizza dough and some vegetables like spinach.

"The priests gave us everything including equipment and the time-honored recipes," said Pinga, Amici general manager and chief operating officer.

Customers will still get the *paninis* (Prosciutto e Formaggio, Tutta Carne, Alle Verdure); pasta (Cannelloni Agli Spinaci, Spaghetti Vongole e Gamberetti, Pasta Montanara); pizza (Napoli, Capricciosa, Fruitti di Mari); and *gelato* (Vanilla with Nuts, Mint with Chocolate, Pistachio), as well as Brazo de Mercedes, Panna Cotta, Mango Tango and Profiteroles.

"We streamlined the menu. We took out stuff that was not moving. We want to focus on products that people like. We improved and standardized the food preparation and presentation," said Moran.

Amici remains a family place, especially on weekends.

Thus, Amici is probably the only Italian restaurant that serves sodas in 1.5-liter containers. Water is served by the pitcher with unlimited ice supply.

"Here, you can get as much ice as you want just like in your own home," Pinga said.

The new owners have given Amici a more modern look though the canteen-like feel lingers. Lunch and dinner crowds now have their meals in an environment that is spacious and bright. The bright lights and yellow, green and red hues give the restaurant a younger, cheerier ambience.

The dining area is cleverly set up with four stations to handle orders: regular cafeteria-style food, pizzas and dine-in *gelato*, pasta and coffee, and takeout ice cream.

Of course, the hub of the dining area is the *gelato* bar, with its wide assortment of flavors.

Though Amici is rather small after Red Ribbon, Moran said it was a welcome challenge.

"We were in the bakeshop business and this is a restaurant. It's new for me, but it's a learning experience. I'm very happy with the way people are responding. There's a big market for Amici. I think the real challenge is to have a business model that will work and allow it to grow," he said.

Amici will open early next year its first branch on Tomas Morato, Quezon City.

Amici is at Antonio Arnaiz corner Chino Roces Avenues, Makati, beside Salesiana and Merriam-Webster Bookstore. It is open Monday-Sunday, 7 a.m.-11 p.m. For Simbang Gabi, it will open at 5 a.m. It delivers around Makati up to The Fort in Taguig City. Call 8184444.

DANNY Moran (right), Amici president, with Iboy Pinga, general manager

SPAGHETTI Vongole e Gamberetti (red wine, tomato sauce, bechamel sauce, anchovies, shrimps and clams)

BUSTLING lunch crowd in Amici

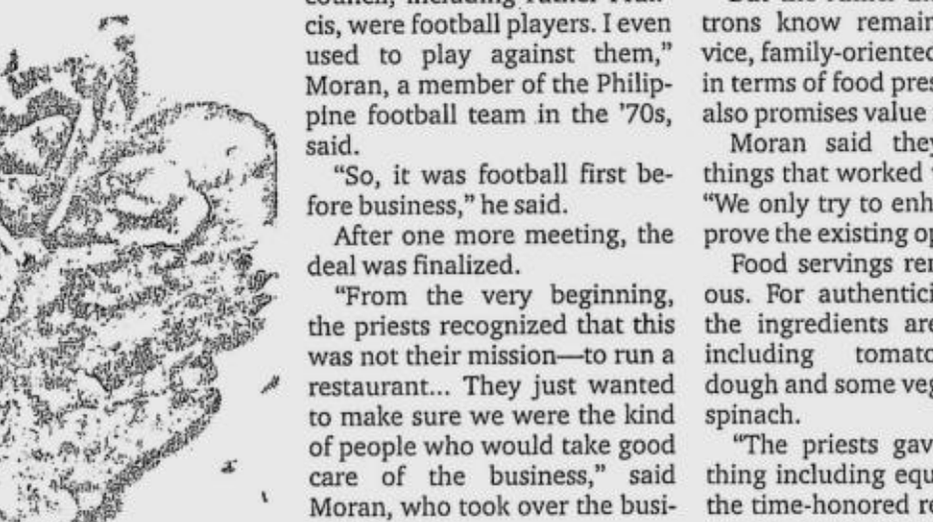
Int'l culinary body grants accreditation to RP school

THE PHILIPPINES, THROUGH THE Center for Culinary Arts Manila (CCA Manila), is now the first country in the Asia-Pacific region and the second outside the United States, apart from Switzerland, to be given accreditation by the prestigious American Culinary Federation Foundation (ACFF). A premier professional chefs' organization based in North America, ACFF has 230 chapters and 19,000 members in the US.

CCA Manila's certificate course on Baking and Pastry Arts and the two-year program in Culinary Arts and Technology Management were granted accreditation by the ACFF.

"The accreditation further establishes CCA Manila as the leading institution not only in the Philippines but also in Asia for producing the best, quality-trained Filipino chefs. It also supports the school's mission of developing students' culinary skills, while at the same time being socially responsible food industry leaders," said Paz Sales, managing director of CCA Manila.

The ACF Foundation Accrediting Commission (ACFFAC) has already sent the official certificates for the two programs to CCA Manila. The accreditation is widely regarded as a "symbol of professionalism." Specialized criteria and procedures have been established for evaluating institutions or programs to determine whether or not they are operating at established standards.



CCA MANILA officials welcoming the chefs from ACFF. CCA Manila's Honey Santiago, Fatima Meneses, Ma. Paz L. Sales, Marinela Trinidad, Susana Guerrero, Anne Palmares and Pons Santillan; (standing) Paul Flores, chefs from ACFF Michael Ty, Harry Brockwell, David Jones, and chef James Antolin of CCA Manila

"The ACFFAC granted us a programmatic accreditation—a specialized accreditation which is a voluntary action on the part of the institution that requires curriculum, faculty, resources, support staff and organizational structure to all meet or exceed quality standards," said Sales.

She added CCA Manila president Annie Guerrero wrote to ACFF to apply for accreditation in 2004. A team of three ACFFAC members, chefs Harry Brockwell, David Jones and Michael Ty, did the ocular visit and interviewed the managers and students, as well as observed classes, lectures, and lab work.

Sales revealed the ACFF granted the accreditation because of the school's emphasis on management skills as well as the holistic development of the students.

Core values

"They were particularly impressed by the school's core values, which focus on how the students relate to people. We told them that when we make the syllabus, we consider three things: knowledge, attitude and skills. Otherwise, you don't have a total development of the student if you focus only on one aspect. What are we an educational institution for if we don't look at all the angles and make better persons out of them?" said Sales.

The accreditation will likewise give students an edge over other schools in terms of skills learned from the programs offered. Students who are graduates of accredited programs are eligible for ACFF certification.

Sales said the challenge now is to maintain the school's good record with the ACFF.

"We need to further improve the professional development of our teachers through instructional and technical skills updating. Thus, we will continuously upgrade ourselves to maintain this valuable accreditation," she concluded.

CCA Manila is at 287 Katipunan Ave., Loyola Heights, Quezon City. Call 4264840, 4264841; e-mail marketing@cca-manila.com; or visit www.cca-manila.com.

RESTAURANT REVIEW

Nice, with a bit of identity crisis

By Gina Martin

WITH ALL THE buzz about this newest kid on the Serendra block, I decided to finally give Mamou a try.

Making my call, I was pleasantly surprised by the friendliness and efficiency with which my reservation was handled—a rarity in these parts. This particular evening brought in a cool breeze so it already felt like a good start. The trek from our parking lot two blocks away was actually quite pleasant with the pulsating street party atmosphere of Bonifacio High Street that evening.

As we reached our destination, I immediately spotted the restaurant signage on the glass window which read, "Mamou— a home kitchen."

I thought, great! They've set some expectations already— the promise of "comfort food." At least, from my vantage point, that was what it implied. The thought of comfort food reminded me of the pot luck lunches at my *titos*' house on New Year's Day when all the relatives brought whatever they wanted to bring.

> At Mamou, the steak can make your taste buds grin from ear to ear

Prompt seating

We entered and were warmly greeted by the chef/owner. The room was filled with people and we were promptly seated. We were immediately handed menus (gentlemen before the ladies—mind you) and without missing a beat, our gracious hostess proceeded to enumerate her "favorite dishes."

Since she was gracious enough and it was our first time dining here, we gave her carte blanch with the choices for our mains.

From where I was sitting, I noticed a hotel pan of lemons on the floor next to the garbage can in the kitchen. I thought, hmmm, ok, no lemonade for me tonight.

While waiting for our food, I decided to go over the menu since I didn't get the chance to do that. The menu runs three half pages and is limited in every area. I feared there might not be enough items to try by my second visit.

They seemed to be going through an identity crisis though; the menu has an Oriental Rice Noodle for a soup, Frankfurter with Sauerkraut for a sandwich, Fish 'N' Chips, Duck Adobo Flakes and Key Lime Pie with Schlag.

I was puzzled that we weren't given a wine list to go with our steak. Funny thing is, beer and cocktails were offered on the menu. Don't red wine and steak go hand in hand just like apple pie and vanilla ice cream? Go figure!

Warm bread and butter immediately arrived. What a nice place... I felt so comfortable I thought I was at home.

Cracked-cheese appetizer with honey and fuet is a winner. It's a classic combination that can't go wrong. The crisp saltiness of the Grano Padano combined with the Catalonian salami then dipped into the sweet smooth honey made me lose track of the conversation we were having at our table.

The spring rolls arrived piping hot but lacking in flavor we had to drown it in the sauce.

The truffle dip filled the room with its aroma as it was set down on our table. The truffle oil overwhelmed the contribution of the mushrooms and the vegetables.

Did I forget to mention that the appetizers were brought to our table one at a time five minutes apart? Yikes!

A meal by itself

One of the items I recommend is the Oriental Rice Noodle; this could be a meal all by itself, served in an elegant white ceramic bowl full of squid balls, kani and mushrooms. The sweet-and-sour broth reminded me of a really good *sinigang*... only better.

Our main courses had arrived, well, one of them (at least they're consistent). The Roast Pork & Chicken was a good choice to share. The chicken pulled easily off the bone and was moist. The pork was tender, but the skin was tough to chew that I thought my veneers would come off.

The fluffy red rice and flavorful black beans and cinnamon sugar plantains reminded me of my mother's Arroz a la Cubana.

The steak came sliced, which was very convenient for sharing, lightly charred on the outside and perfectly medium rare on the inside. I closed my eyes as I took a bite and my mouth was filled with happiness that made my taste buds grin from ear to ear.

Corn pudding and creamed spinach were good sides for the steak; I could have them over rice on a rainy day.

Safe sweets

Desserts were safe. The ones to go with here are the Key Lime and the Pecan Pie. The Key Lime is sweet with a good balance of sour tang on a graham cracker crust. The Pecan Pie comes with a creamy center topped with roasted pecans served with *schlag* (German for "whipped cream." Why can't we just say whipped cream instead of putting a term that you need to translate for fear it will confuse your patrons?)

If you need a chocolate fix, please skip the Sans Rival.

That night it seemed that no matter where you were seated the noise level just seemed to keep rising that you found yourself raising your voice and making that "huh?" face to your friends.

Although this place is fairly new and still has a long way to go, its fair share of hits and misses can easily be tweaked. I can see why all is abuzz about this place. Its friendly staff and comfort food will keep them coming back for more.

And if you're wondering about the lemons, they were still on the floor when we left the restaurant.

Review card

Rating: ☆☆ Good

Restaurant:
Mamou

Location:
Unit 1C-15 G/F, Serendra, Fort Bonifacio Global City
1634 Taguig
8563569/0917-8162668
mamou@info.com.ph

Ambiance:
Nice and charming neighborhood-feel restaurant with outdoor seating. No private dining area. A place for grownups.

Concept:
Home-cooked comfort food

Service:
Quick and friendly without being intrusive

Prices:
Appetizers P95-P295.
Soups/salads P155-P295.
Sandwiches P220-P280.
Entrees P255-P2,800.
Dessert P155-P180

Best dishes:
Cracked Cheese with Honey and Fuet. Oriental Rice Noodle. Steak with Corn Pudding and Creamed Spinach. Key Lime Pie

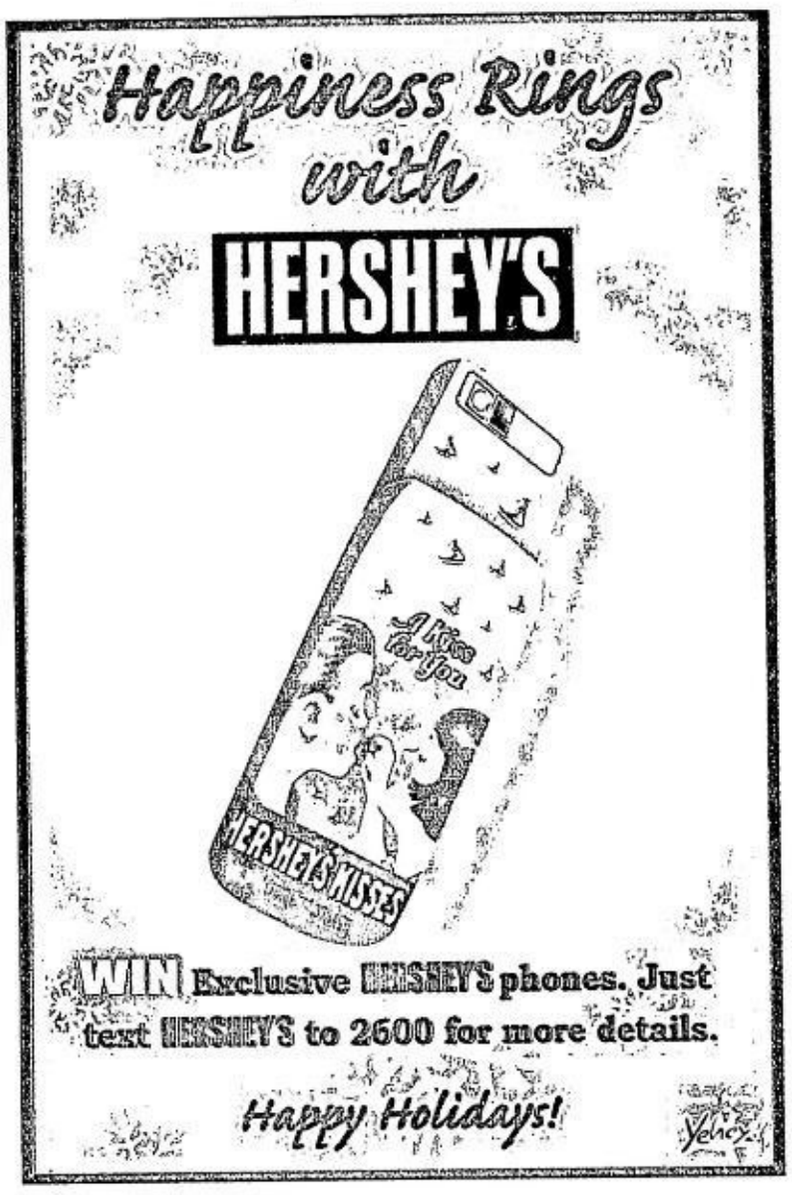
Wine list:
None. Very limited cocktail menu

Best table:
Outside on a cool night.

Details:
Open for lunch

Rating is based on food, service and ambience, with price taken into account in relation to quality.

Outstanding on every level	☆☆☆☆☆
Excellent	☆☆☆☆
Very Good	☆☆☆
Good	☆☆
Poor to Fair	☆



SWEET DREAM
Mrs. Fields presents the Dream Bar, sliced into tiny nibblers but packed with peanut butter and sandwiched by a chocolate bar atop with a crunchy crust down under. Mrs. Fields is at 3/F, CityWalk 2, Eastwood City, Libis, QC. Call 7227399 or 0917-8EWCITY.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2007

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

ENTERTAINMENT

Website: www.inquirer.net/entertainment

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

sms feedback: inquirer ent name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 283 (Smart) or email us at entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

INSIDE

PDI Entertainment Hub

BIG-NAME stars turned up for the INQUIRER's 22nd anniversary party. Who joined "Duets" champ Tessa Valdes and "Bubble Gang" star Michael V onstage—and off? /D6

GIMME FIVE

...make that four prints. His feet in cement, Will Smith hams it up with pal Tom Cruise, above, then cheerily rounds up the hand and footprint ceremony at the Grauman's Theatre in H'wood on Monday. In the audience were his kids Willow and Jaden.

Pilita in Jakarta

...as a judge on 'Asian Idol'; RP bet Mau Marcelo all set for finals

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Photo courtesy of www.theasianidol.tv

PILITA CORRALES, THE FILIPINO JUDGE for "Asian Idol," has arrived in Jakarta, where the first-ever regional version of the phenomenal reality talent search on worldwide television is ongoing.

This was relayed to INQUIRER Entertainment via SMS on Tuesday from the Indonesian capital by Belay Chavez, who is escorting Philippine bet Mau Marcelo for the management company Artist House.

The "Asian Idol" finals will be aired 8-10 p.m. Dec. 15 and 9 p.m.-12 midnight Dec. 16, on RCTI—described by Marcelo as the "No. 1 TV station in Indonesia"—which is mounting the show with Fremantle Media, franchise holder. Locally, ABC 5 is airing the whole competition live via satellite.

On Saturday, Marcelo and the five other contenders—from Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, India and Singapore—met with Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.

Chavez said Yudhoyono, whose entire Cabinet and family were present, sang his own composition, "Let's Save Our Planet" and gave the Idols a copy of his CD.

Yudhoyono then asked the Idols to each render a song. Said Chavez, "Mau wasn't feeling well, but she belted out Whitney Houston's 'Saving All My Love for You.'"

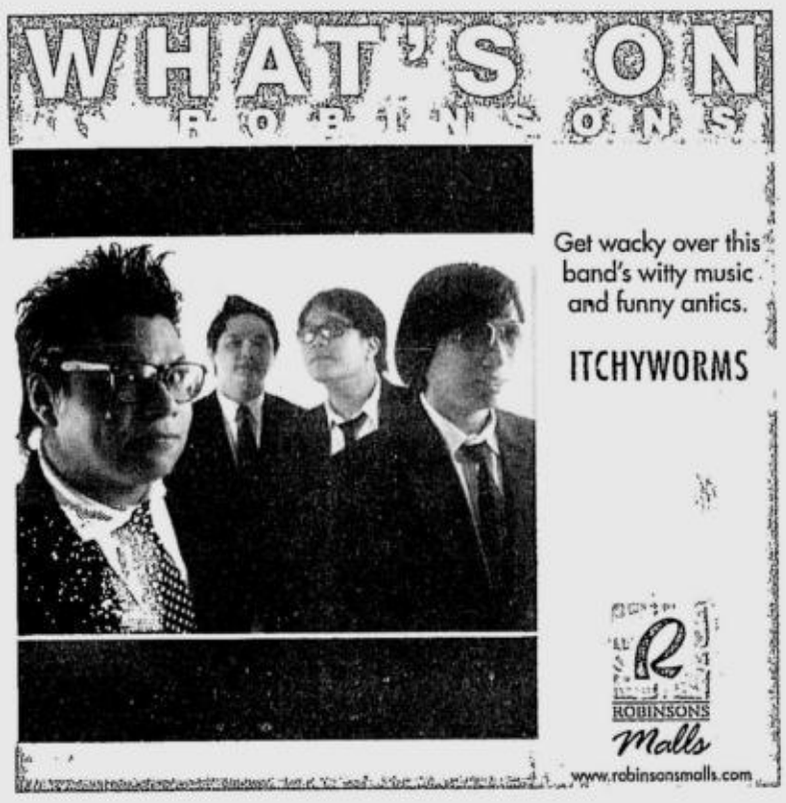
MAU is welcomed at the Jakarta airport by Indra Yanti, "Asian Idol" publicist.

That same night, the "Road to Asian Idol" TV special was launched.

Thoroughly prepared

On Thursday, before leaving Manila, Marcelo told INQUIRER Entertainment that she was thoroughly prepared for the tilt. She had rehearsed her competition pieces, "Ako ang Nagwagi" and "Reach" with stage director Freddie Santos and voice coach Zebedee Zuñiga. The musical arrangements arrived by e-mail two days before. (The contestants are expected to sing in English and in their native languages.)

Marcelo relayed her hectic Jakarta schedule to INQUIRER via a text message on Saturday, which she ended in Bahasa: "*Terima kasih*. That's thank you."



Led Zep should take this show on tour – soon

LONDON—AFTER THAT PERFORMANCE, Led Zeppelin really must go on tour.

The reunited rock 'n' roll legends were superb Monday (Tuesday in Manila) in their first full concert in nearly three decades, mixing in classics like "Stairway to Heaven" and "Black Dog" with the thumping "Kashmir" and the hard-rocking "Dazed and Confused."

The band's three surviving members—singer Robert Plant, guitarist Jimmy Page and bassist-keyboardist John Paul Jones—were joined by the late John Bonham's son Jason on drums.

Bonham kicked off the sold-out benefit show at the O2 Arena, pounding out the beat before the others joined in on a near-perfect "Good Times Bad Times."

They followed that with "Ramble On," destroying talk that the 59-year-old Plant could no longer reproduce his trademark wail.

With his button-down shirt mercifully buttoned up, Plant roamed the stage belting out hit after hit.

The star

Page, 63, showed he still has the touch as well. Ripping out his patented riffs all night, he put the spotlight on himself when the band played "In My Time of Dying."

Plant and Page later combined to open "Nobody's Fault But Mine," a song that starts with another classic Page riff and then gets help from Plant mimicking the same sounds.

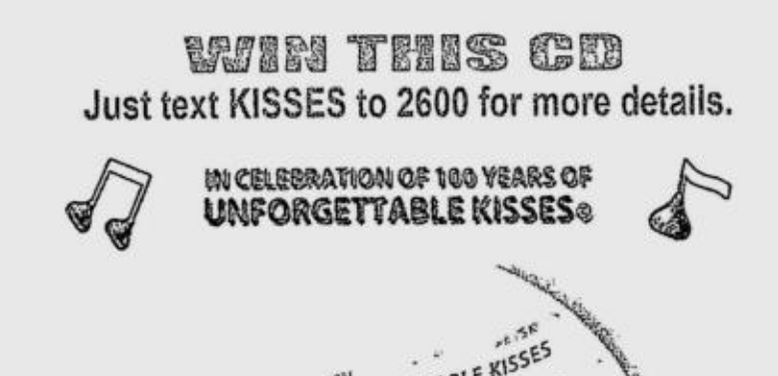
Still, it was Bonham who may have been the star of the show. At 41, he is older than his father was— 32—when he choked to death on his own vomit in 1980.

Bonham's flawless performance and driving beat even made the other members of the band watch in awe at the end of "Black Dog."

After "The Song Remains the Same," Plant screamed: 'Jason Bonham, drums!"

The 16-song set list produced few surprises. They did many of the songs expected, such as "No Quarter" and "Trampled Under Foot," and the entire show lasted a bit more than two hours, mainly because of encores "Whole Lotta Love" and "Rock and Roll."

To be sure, fans are hoping that the band does this again, and soon. *Chris Lehourites, AP*



YOUSSIF, left, after the attack

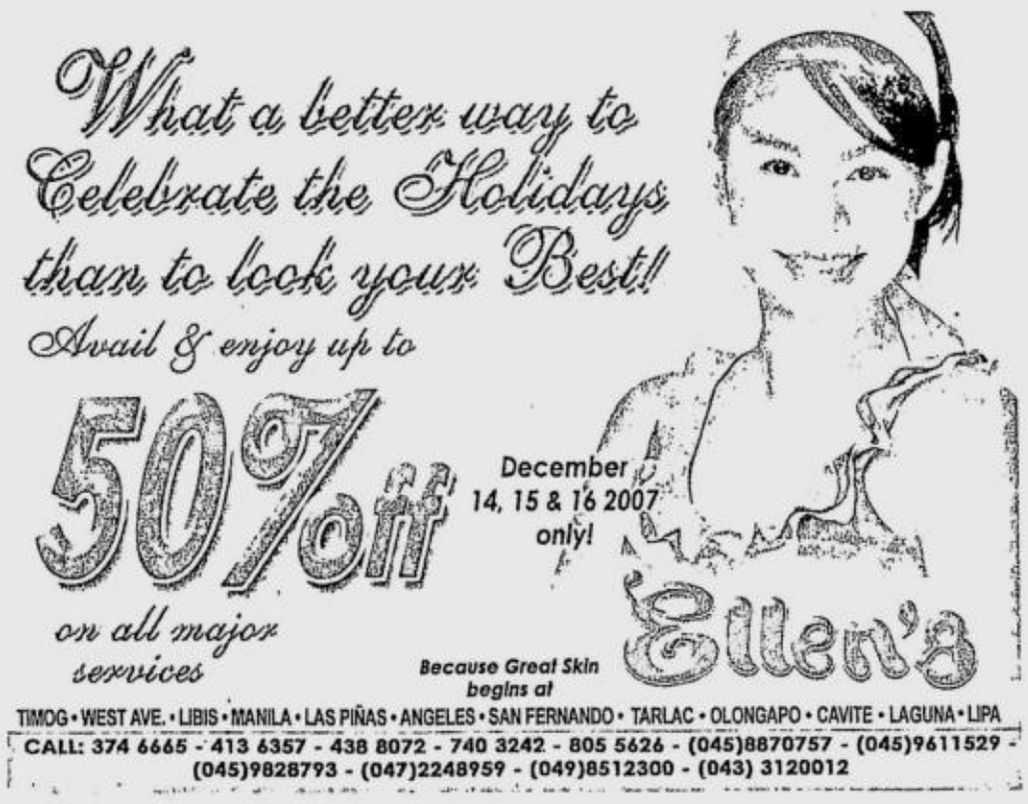
Medical journey

CNN'S ARWA DAMON AND DR. SANJAY Gupta tell the story of a young Iraqi boy's journey to recovery from a horrific attack in "CNN Special Investigations Unit: Rescuing Youssif" on Dec. 15, 2 p.m. and 11 p.m. and Dec. 16, 2 p.m.

Five-year-old Youssif was one day doused in gasoline by masked assailants and set on fire, resulting in terrible body burns.

Damon, CNN's Baghdad-based correspondent, reported the story on CNN International.

Through CNN's online Impact Your World initiative, viewers made contributions to the Children's Burn Foundation, allowing Youssif and his family to fly to the US for treatment.



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WARNER MUSIC PHILIPPINES · Las Piñas Boys Choir Philippines · sunday INQUIRER magazine · S.A.F. · i-mag · 105.1fm CROSSOVER · MAGIC 89.9 · PinoyCentric · Joel Salindong digital videos · Cravings · Majic Pack

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SHANG CINEPLEX

1 ELIZABETH
MTRCB: PG-13
1:00, 3:50, 6:40, 9:30

2 GOLDEN COMPASS
MTRCB: PG-13
1:30, 4:10, 6:50, 9:30

3 ELIZABETH
MTRCB: PG-13
12:30, 3:20, 6:10, 9:00

4 ENCHANTED
MTRCB: PG 2:00, 4:30
THE KINGDOM
MTRCB: R-13 7:00, 9:30

PREMIERE THEATRE
DEATH PROOF
MTRCB: R-13
2:15, 4:40, 7:05, 9:30

Movies and schedules are subject to change without prior notice

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1 ENCHANTED
2:35, 5:15, 7:55, 10:35
G

2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2:40, 5:20, 8:00, 10:35
PG-13

3 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE
2:00, 4:50, 7:40, 10:30
PG-13

4 GRINDHOUSE: DEATH PROOF
3:15, 5:40, 8:05, 10:30
R-13

Now On Disc

'Harry Potter' 5

IN "HARRY POTTER and the Order of the Phoenix," Lord Voldemort has returned, but the Ministry of Magic is doing everything to keep the world of wizardry from knowing the truth.

Ron and Hermione convince Harry to secretly train a group of students for the wizardry war ahead.

The fifth in the Potter series is now available on a two-disc special edition from Warner Home Video.

'License to Wed'

"License to Wed," now available on DVD from Warner Home Video, follows the tale of newly engaged Ben Murphy (John Krasinski) and Sadie Jones (Mandy Moore).

Before their trip to the altar, they are put through Reverend Frank's (Robin Williams) marriage prep course consisting of outlandish homework and outright invasion of privacy.

AT THE CINEMAS

Reserve your tickets by texting SURESEATS GB3 or SURESEATS G4 to 2333 (Globe) or 211 (Smart) or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.
Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification, please call 729-7777

GLORIETTA 1	1 CATACOMB	2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	3 HOOD OF HORROR	4 HITMAN
GLORIETTA 4	1 ENCHANTED	2 THE KINGDOM	3 THX ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 GONE BABY GONE	5 BATANES	6 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	7 DEATH PROOF
GREENBELT 1	1 PAPER DOLLS		2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	
GREENBELT 3	1 THX THE GOLDEN COMPASS GUARANTEED SEATS		2 THX ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE GUARANTEED SEATS	
	3 DEATH PROOF GUARANTEED SEATS	4 GONE BABY GONE GUARANTEED SEATS	5 EASTERN PROMISES GUARANTEED SEATS	
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX THE GOLDEN COMPASS		2 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN COMPASS	
	3 DEATH PROOF	4 CATACOMB	5 THE KINGDOM	
AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	2 THE GAME PLAN	3 FRED CLAUS	4 EASTERN PROMISES
MARKET! MARKET!	1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS		2 DEATH PROOF	
	3 HOOD OF HORROR	4 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE	5 CATACOMB	
TRINOMA	1 BATANES	2 DEATH PROOF	3 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE GUARANTEED SEATS	4 HOOD OF HORROR GUARANTEED SEATS
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AT THE MALLS

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Glorietta - 752 7272 · Greenbelt - 757 4853 to 54 · Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; 772 1860 · Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc. 324 · Market! Market! - 886 7519 · TriNoma - 901 3000

Ayala Malls

glorietta
Philippine Madrigal Singers
with Robert Seña and Isay Alvarez
December 8; 6pm; Glorietta 4 Park

GREENBELT
The Dawn Jazz Nights
December 5; 7:30pm; Greenbelt 2 Al Fresco Area

ALABANG TOWN CENTER
Southern Musicians Concert
December 9; 5pm; Town Plaza

AYALA CENTER CEBU
FREE Christmas Gift Bag for every P500 worth of purchase.
See leaflets for details. Per DTI-Cebu Permit No. 584, Series of 2007
December 1 to 31

MARKET! MARKET!
Christmas Shoes: A Christmas Musicale
December 6; 7pm; Activity Center

Greenbelt Onstage
Repertory Philippines presents FIDDLER ON THE ROOF
November 9 - December 16, 2007
For inquiries, pls. call 887-0710
or visit www.repertory-philippines.com

Ayala MUSEUM
WATER: THE MEDIUM by Juvenal Sanso
November 24 to January 13, 2008; Ground Floor Gallery
For more info, pls. call 757-7117 to 21 loc. 14 or email museum_inquiry@ayalamuseum.org

TriNoma
Christmas Chorale featuring Martin Nievera
December 6; 6pm; Activity Center

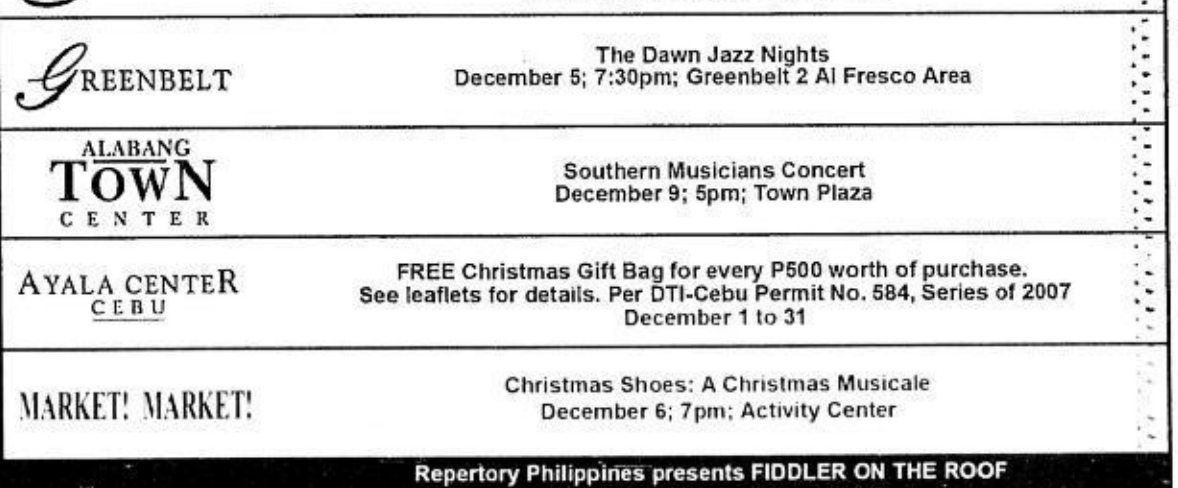
Rhythm Academy: Sam Concepcion with the Augustinian Larks
December 9; 6pm; Activity Center

The Embassy of Israel Manila in cooperation with Ayala Malls Cinemas
presents
paperDOLLS
A Documentary film by Tomer Heymann

This film showing is dedicated
in memory of Sally Camatoy, one of the main leads,
who was found dead on the streets of Dubai.
Portion of the proceeds will go to Sally Camatoy family.

DECEMBER 12-18, 2007
GREENBELT 1 CINEMA

For screening schedules, please call: 729-7777
MTRCB Rating: Restricted 13 (R-13)



Taylor Hicks Live

Glorietta
December 18, 2007
Glorietta 4 Park
7:00pm
Concierge hotline: 752.7272

Greenbelt
December 19, 2007
Greenbelt 3 Park
8:00pm
Concierge hotline: 757.4853

TriNoma
December 20, 2007
Activity Center
7:00pm
Concierge hotline: 901.3000

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after each show

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Chemical Romance in Manila

THE MULTI-PLATINUM selling American rock band My Chemical Romance is performing on Jan. 25, 2008 at the Fort Bonifacio Open Field, Taguig.

Formed shortly after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, MCR is currently composed of singer Gerard Way, bassist Mikey Way, guitarists Frank Iero and Ray Toro, and drummer Bob Bryar.

The band recorded its indie-label debut album in 2002 before being signed to Reprise Records, which released its "Three Cheers for Sweet Revenge" album in 2004.

It sold more than one million copies.

Dangerous

The success was replicated with 2006's "The Black Parade," the album that established MCR as a world-famous group whose music has been the subject of debate among fans and the media.

Band members have rejected the term "emo" to describe their sound, preferring to call it simply as rock or, as their website says, "violent, dangerous pop." They cite Queen, Thursday, Iron Maiden, The Misfits, Morrissey/The Smiths and the Beastie Boys as their main influences.

The MCR gig in Manila is being promoted by Viva Concerts. Call 687-6181 loc. 620 and 745.

Pocholo Concepcion

OPENS DECEMBER 19
A science-fiction writer is about to get the biggest inspiration of his life... from a kid not of this world.
martian child
Based on the Hugo Award & Nebula Award-winning short story by renowned sci-fi luminary David Gerrold.
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amanda peet
and
bobby coleman

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ELIZABETH	CATACOMB	DEATH PROOF	HOOD OF HORROR	ELIZABETH
1:05 | 3:55 6:45 | 9:30	12:10 | 2:30 4:50 | 7:10 | 9:30	1:05 | 3:50 6:35 | 9:20	1:30 | 3:30 5:30 | 7:30 | 9:30	12:30 | 3:20 6:10 | 9:00

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GOLDEN COMPASS	ONE MORE CHANCE	BEOWULF	BATANES	ENCHANTED
2:00 | 4:30 7:00 | 9:30	12:45 | 3:40 6:35 | 9:30	2:25 | 7:05 THE KINGDOM 12:10 | 4:50 | 9:30	4:20 | 9:20 PASUKOB 1:50 | 6:50	1:45 | 4:20 6:55 | 9:30

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2 CATACOMBS
3 DEATH PROOF
4 SHIRI/ ENCHANTED
5 BATANES
6 ONE MORE CHANCE
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2 THE KINGDOM
3 BATANES
4 HITMAN
5 PASUKOB
6 ELIZABETH
7 GOLDEN COMPASS
8 CATACOMBS
9 SHIRI/ VHAGETS
10 DEATH PROOF
11 ONE MORE CHANCE
12 ENCHANTED

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901
1 ELIZABETH
2 BEOWULF
3 GOLDEN COMPASS
4 ONE MORE CHANCE
5 SHIRI
6 BATANES
7 VHAGETS
8 CATACOMBS
9 HITMAN
10 PASUKOB
11 DEATH PROOF
12 HOOD OF HORROR

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
1 EASTERN PROMISES
2 ENCHANTED
3 PASUKOB
4 HITMAN
5 ONE MORE CHANCE
6 SHIRI
7 GOLDEN COMPASS
8 BATANES
9 BEOWULF
10 THE KINGDOM
11 DEATH PROOF
12 VHAGETS

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
1 DEATH PROOF
2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3 BATANES
4 PASUKOB

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
1 DEATH PROOF
2 ELIZABETH
3 GOLDEN COMPASS
4 SHIRI/ PASUKOB
5 CATACOMBS
6 ONE MORE CHANCE

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975
1 BATANES
2 DEATH PROOF
3 GOLDEN COMPASS
4 PASUKOB

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888
1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 BATANES
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 ELIZABETH
5 PASUKOB
6 DEATH PROOF
7 SHIRI
8 CATACOMBS
9 VHAGETS

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
1 GOLDEN COMPASS
2 DEATH PROOF
3 ELIZABETH
4 PASUKOB
5 BATANES
6 BEOWULF
7 ONE MORE CHANCE
8 VHAGETS/ SHIRI
9 THE KINGDOM
10 EASTERN PROMISES

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3 ELIZABETH
4 PASUKOB

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1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 CATACOMBS
3 VHAGETS/ SHIRI
4 BATANES
5 DEATH PROOF
6 ELIZABETH
7 ONE MORE CHANCE
8 THE KINGDOM
9 PASUKOB
10 BEOWULF
11 HITMAN
12 ENCHANTED

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917
1 GOLDEN COMPASS
2 BATANES
3 PASUKOB
4 ONE MORE CHANCE

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4 ONE MORE CHANCE
5 BATANES
6 PASUKOB
7 SHIRI
8 EASTERN PROMISES

SM CITY MARILAO (044)9332013-17
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2 NANNY DIARIES
3 BATANES
4 HITMAN

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO (040)474-3100
1 BATANES
2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 PASUKOB

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4323201-04
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3 GOLDEN COMPASS

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2 THE GAMEPLAN
3 GOLDEN COMPASS
4 HITMAN

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)9037681-85
1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 SHIRI
3 THE KINGDOM
4 VHAGETS
5 BATANES
6 PASUKOB

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5340811
1 THE GAMEPLAN
2 HITMAN
3 GOLDEN COMPASS
4 PASUKOB/ LIONS FOR LAMBS

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80
1 GOLDEN COMPASS
2 ONE MORE CHANCE
3 PASUKOB
4 LIONS FOR LAMBS

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6197838-39
1 HITMAN
2 SHIRI
3 THE GAME PLAN
4 GOLDEN COMPASS

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45
1 GOLDEN COMPASS
2 THE KINGDOM
3 THE GAMEPLAN
4 BOOGEYMAN 2
5 PASUKOB
6 BATANES/ FRED CALUSE

SM CITY BATANGAS 885-6401-04
1 HITMAN
2 PASUKOB
3 GOLDEN COMPASS
4 THE GAMEPLAN

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998
1 HITMAN
2 THE GAMEPLAN
3 SHIRI
4 RENDITION
5 THE KINGDOM
6 GOLDEN COMPASS

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4 GOLDEN COMPASS
5 HITMAN
6 THE GAMEPLAN
7 RESERVED
8 FRED CLAUSE

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2 GOLDEN COMPASS
3 EASTERN PROMISES
4 THE GAMEPALN
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7 UNREST
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1 HITMAN
2 GOLDEN COMPASS
3 MR. MAGORIUM'S WONDER EMPORIUM
4 RENDITION

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2 (DOLBY) THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE
4 (DOLBY) ENCHANTED / THE KINGDOM

PREMIERE
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3 HOOD OF HORROR
4 THE KINGDOM

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(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150
3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
4 (SDDS/DIGITAL EX) HOOD OF HORROR
5

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1 HOOD OF HORROR
2 BATANES
3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
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2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3 HITMAN

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1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 BATANES
3
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1 (DTS) HOOD OF HORROR
2 (SDDS) THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3 GRINDHOUSE: DEATH PROOF
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL) ENCHANTED
5 (DOLBY DIGITAL) CATACOMBS
6 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE
7 (DOLBY) THE KINGDOM
8 (DIGITAL) RESERVED
9 (DIGITAL) ONE MORE CHANCE
10 (DIGITAL) BATANES / PASUKOB

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2 (DOLBY) BATANES
3 (DOLBY) THE GOLDENT COMPASS
4 (DOLBY)

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tel 7334228

1 (DOLBY) RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 THE GOLDENT COMPASS
5 HOOD OF HORROR

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong
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1 ENCHANTED
2 HOOD OF HORROR
3 BATANES
4

Masagana CINEMA
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1 THE KINGDOM
2 THE GOLDENT COMPASS
3 HOOD OF HORROR

Center Mall Cinema
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1 HITMAN
2 THE GOLDENT COMPASS

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2 BATANES
3 (DTS EX) THE KINGDOM
4 FRED CLAUS

Centre Plaza Cinema
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1 BEOWULF
2 THE GOLDENT COMPASS

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1 (DOLBY) ENCHANTED
2 (DOLBY) THE GOLDENT COMPASS
3 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE
4 GRINDHOUSE: DEATH PROOF

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3 (DOLBY) THE GOLDENT COMPASS
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2 (DOLBY) RESERVED
3 (DTS) RESERVED
4 RESERVED

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1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 BEOWULF
3 (DOLBY) 30 DAYS OF NIGHT

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2 BOOGEYMAN
3 (DOLBY) THE GOLDEN COMPASS
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2 GAME PLAN
3 (DOLBY) THE GOLDEN COMPASS

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1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 BEOWULF

Lianas Cinema
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1 BATANES
2 ONE MORE CHANCE

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS) HOOD OF HORROR
2 KIKAY
3 BATANES
4 (DTS) BEOWULF

Lianas MovieCity
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2 GRACIA
3 (DTS) HITMAN
4 BATANES
5 30 DAYS OF NIGHT

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 HITMAN
3 GAME PLAN
4 BOOGEYMAN - 2

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029

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2

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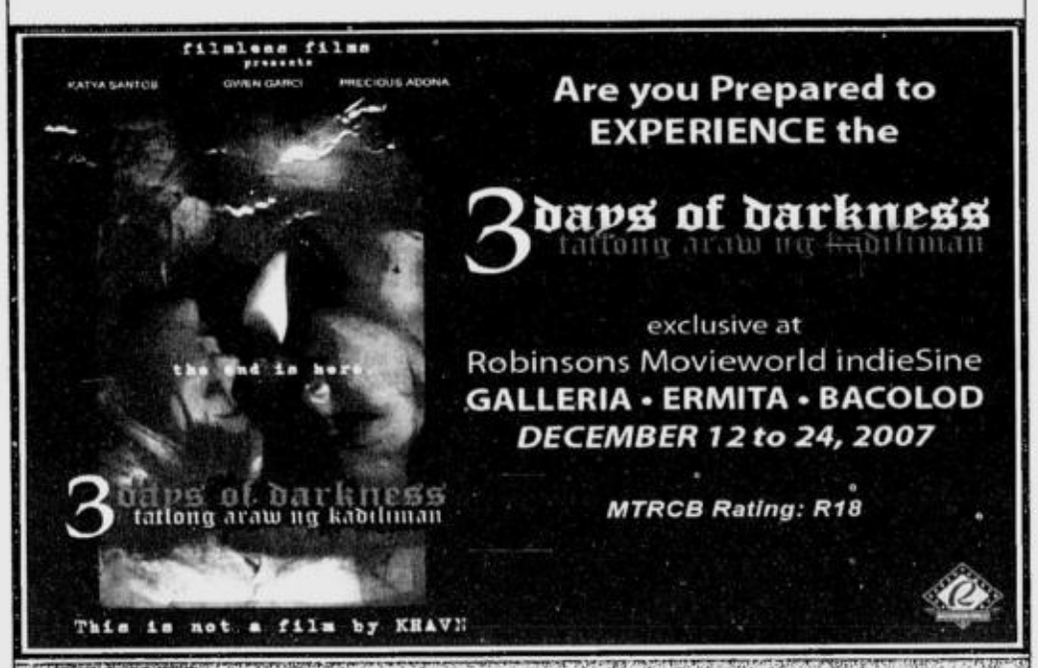
GALLERIA
Ticket Price: P180/P160 (130) Indie Sine: P30 633-9118

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS • THX
2 HOOD of HORROR
3 CATACOMBS
4 BATANES
5 GRINDHOUSE: DEATH PROOF
6 ELIZABETH: GOLDEN AGE
7 ENCHANTED
8 indieSine: 3 DAYS of DARKNESS
9 HITMAN
10 BEOWULF



ERMITA
Ticket Price: P180/P160

1 GRINDHOUSE: DEATH PROOF
2 indieSine: 3 DAYS of DARKNESS
3 HOOD of HORROR
4 CATACOMBS
5 PASUKOB
6 ENCHANTED
7 HITMAN / BEOWULF
1 BATANES
2 ELIZABETH: GOLDEN AGE
3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS

Midtown

METRO EAST
Ticket Price: P100/P110 - 882-8103 - 882-5100

1 ELIZABETH: GOLDEN AGE
2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3 CATACOMBS
4 GRINDHOUSE: DEATH PROOF
5 EASTERN PROMISES
6 BEOWULF / ENCHANTED
7 HOOD of HORROR
8 BATANES

NOVALICHES
Ticket Price: P120 - 935-3231 / 935-3228-30

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 HOOD of HORROR
3 BATANES
4 PASUKOB

PIONEER
Ticket Price: P120 - 687-5378

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 ELIZABETH: GOLDEN AGE
3 GRINDHOUSE: DEATH PROOF
4 CATACOMBS

STA. ROSA
Ticket Price: P80 / P90 (049) 837-0907

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 GAME PLAN
3 HITMAN
4 LIONS FOR LAMBS / BATANES

LIPA
Ticket Price: P90 (043) 757-3664 (043) 312-5870

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 BATANES
3 HITMAN
4 BOOGEYMAN 2

DASMARINAS
Ticket Price: P80 / P90 (046) 416-4332

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 GHOST SON
3 HOOD of HORROR
4 BATANES

IMUS
Ticket Price: P100 (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-6188

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 GHOST SON
3 HOOD of HORROR
4 BATANES

ANGELES
Ticket Price: P90 / P95 (045) 892-2348

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 FRED CLAUS / BOOGEYMAN 2
3 WE OWN THE NIGHT
4 THE KINGDOM

TARLAC

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 LIONS FOR LAMBS / BATANES
3 ENCHANTED

STARMILLS
Ticket Price: P80 / P90 (045) 875-1927

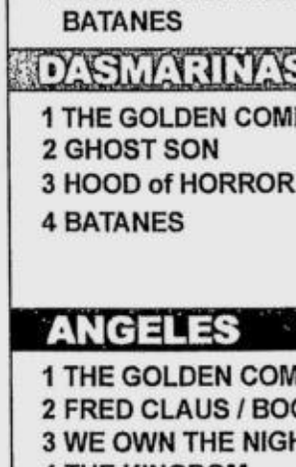
1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 FRED CLAUS
3 WE OWN THE NIGHT
4 THE KINGDOM
5 BOOGEYMAN 2
6 BATANES

BACOLOD
Ticket Price: P70 (034) 441-0459

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 HITMAN
3 MR. MAGORIUM's WONDER EMPORIUM
4 THE KINGDOM
5 LUST CAUTION
6 indieSine: 3 DAYS of DARKNESS

ILOILO
Ticket Price: P70.50 / P80.50 (033) 336-8070

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 HITMAN
3 FRED CLAUS
4 MR. MAGORIUM's WONDER EMPORIUM
5 BOOGEYMAN 2
6 GAME PLAN



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THE GOLDEN COMPASS PG13 2:20,4:50,7:20,9:50	ELIZABETH THE GOLDEN AGE PG13 1:00,3:30,6:00,8:30	THE GOLDEN COMPASS PG13 12:20,2:50,5:20, 7:50,10:20
THE KINGDOM R13 12:30,2:55,5:20, 7:45,10:10	DEATH PROOF R13 1:30,3:40,5:50, 8:00,10:10	ELIZABETH THE GOLDEN AGE PG13 12:30,3:00,5:30, 8:00,10:30

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CINEMA 4: THE GOLDEN COMPASS 11:15 , 2:00 , 4:40 7:20 , 10:00 PG-13
CINEMA 5: ELIZABETH 11:15 , 2:10 , 5:00 7:50 , 10:35 PG - 13

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MUSIC MUSEUM

December 14 , 2007	Mark Herras	8:00 PM
December 15 , 2007	The Company	8:00 PM
December 19 , 2007	Pilita Corales , Dulce , Malu Barry	8:30 PM
December 26 , 2007	Pooh	8:00 PM

T·I·A·T·R·O PROMENADE GREENHILLS

December 20, 2007	Jed Madela	8:00 PM
December 28 & 29 , 2007	Drag - Ons	10:00 PM

FOR INQUIRIES PLS. CALL 722-4532 LOC 116

A diario novela by CARLO J. CAPARAS

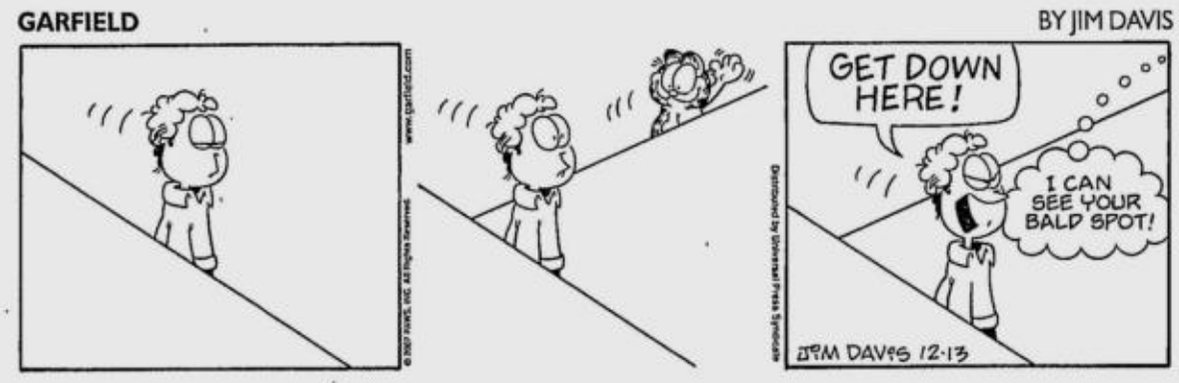
To have and to hold

Art: ARNEL A. AVETRIA

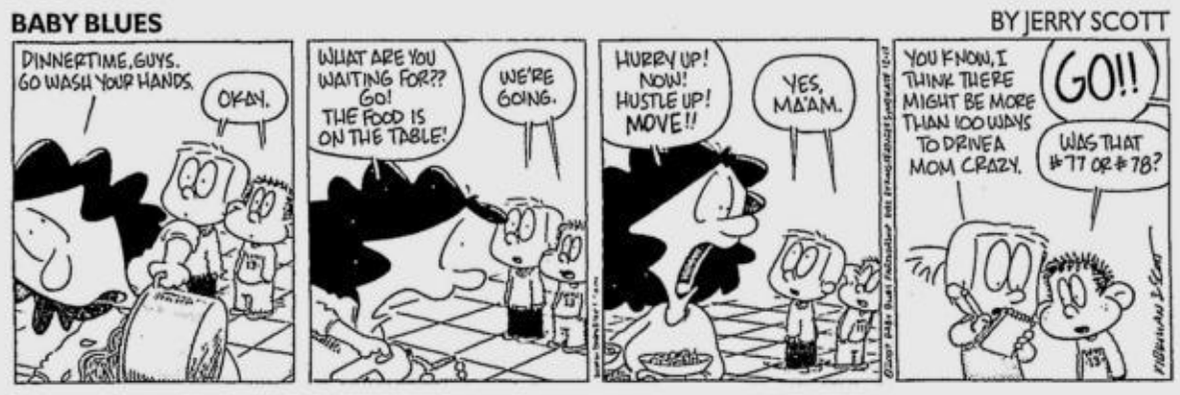
A. LIPIN — BY JESS ABRERA

PUGAD BABOY — BY P.M. JUNIOR

GARFIELD — BY JIM DAVIS



BABY BLUES — BY JERRY SCOTT



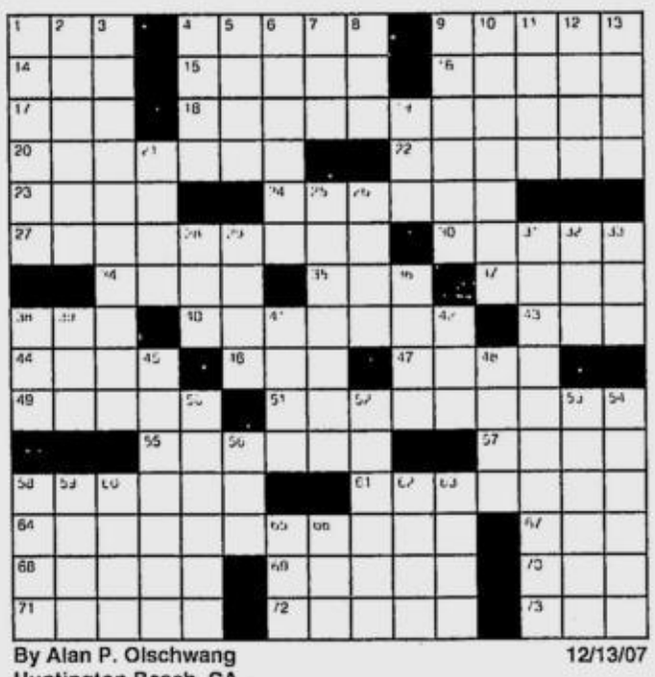
ATOMO AND WEBOY — BY LYRA GARCELLANO

LOVEKNOTS — BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

KIKO MACHINE — BY MANIX ABRERA

BEN — BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Alan P. Olschwang
Huntington Beach, CA

12/13/07

ACROSS

1 West of Hollywood
4 Of the Vatican
9 "Common Sense" author
14 Container with a tap
15 Kind of bird?
16 Behaved humanly?
17 AARP members
18 Start of Evan Esar quip
20 Tourney
22 Prayer
23 Maid in India
24 Stage whispers
27 Part 2 of quip
30 Lanterns
34 Meadowlands
35 Pump fuel
37 Fastidious
38 "__: Miami"
40 Part 3 of quip
43 "Bill __, the Science Guy"
44 Female relative
46 Gridiron meas.
47 Thin strip of wood
49 Sired
51 Part 4 of quip
55 Gracious with ease
57 Having wings
58 Newspaper bigwig
61 Mobile home?
64 End of quip
67 Docs
68 Butt heads
69 Lying face down
70 Shoe size
71 Pointers
72 Repairs
73 '60s radical group

DOWN

1 Oman's capital
2 Dry gulch
3 Tangling
4 Rose or Sampras
5 Exclamations of satisfaction
6 Sort of earnings
7 Clerical vestment
8 Caustic substance
9 Small seabird
10 Craftsperson
11 Eye part
12 Verne captain
13 Idyllic place
19 Instant greenery
21 Friend's address
25 Enlists oneself
26 Brit's indignant comment
28 Post-grad pursuit
29 Pale
31 Intelligence test figures
32 __ the piper
33 Fr. holy woman
36 Mediocre
38 Trucker's perch
39 Litigate
41 Icelandic saga
42 Most remote, briefly
45 Least slack
48 Pequod's captain
50 Fidelities
52 Kevin of "SNL"
53 Improvised musically
54 Expunges
56 Sister's sib
58 Use acid for art
59 Portuguese Timor's capital
60 Somali supermodel
62 Come down to earth
63 Chopping tools
65 Record time?
66 Afore

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

E	Y	I	N	G	■	O	T	T	O	■	E	R	A	S
T	E	N	O	R	■	P	A	I	D	■	B	E	L	T
H	A	N	O	I	■	E	N	K	I	■	O	B	I	E
■	R	U	N	N	I	N	G	I	N	P	L	A	C	E
A	L	E	■	D	D	E	■	■	■	O	A	T	E	R
B	O	N	A	■	A	R	T	E	L	S	■	E	S	S
A	N	D	R	E	■	■	B	R	E	E	D	■	■	■
■	G	O	I	N	G	F	O	R	B	R	O	K	E	■
■	■	■	A	S	I	A	N	■	■	S	N	I	P	S
O	A	T	■	I	N	S	E	T	S	■	S	N	I	T
C	L	A	N	G	■	■	■	O	P	T	■	E	T	A
T	A	K	I	N	G	T	H	E	F	I	F	T	H	■
A	M	E	N	■	L	O	U	T	■	E	L	I	E	L
N	O	U	N	■	O	L	G	A	■	R	E	C	T	O
E	S	P	Y	■	P	L	O	P	■	S	A	S	S	Y

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12/13/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're thoughtful, careful and observant. Because your perceptions are vast and you also observe the little details around you, you generally succeed at what you do. Many of you will tackle big projects that take years to complete. You're intrigued by what makes people tick. Get ready for a powerful year ahead. It could be one of the best years of your life!

Birthdate of: Jamie Foxx, actor; Wendie Malick, actress; Carlos Montoya, flamenco guitarist.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Your appreciation of beauty is heightened today. You're interested to learn more about other cultures, different religions and what other people believe.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You feel generous toward others today, or perhaps someone will be generous to you. Either way, someone is bound to benefit. People have a soft, compassionate, caring attitude today.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Now is the time to discuss something a bit difficult with partners or close friends. Others are sympathetic to what you have to say.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You get along quite easily today with co-workers and customers. This is because you almost know what other people are thinking. You're very tuned in today!

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): This is a wonderful day to enjoy playful activities with children. You might have an opportunity to help a child today. Artists can be productive because you're in touch with your creative powers—whether it's painting, playing music or cooking.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): If you can help a family member today, you will gladly do so. Conversely, a family member might help you. People are sympathetic to each other today.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Don't worry if you spend a lot of time daydreaming today. Your imagination is in overdrive. (Sometimes we need to do this.)

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): If shopping, you'll spend money on beautiful, luxurious things. This is because your appreciation of beauty is strong today. However, you also will want to be charitable to others.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You feel gentle, soft and kind toward others today. Because of this, quite naturally, others will be gentle and kind to you. (What you put out into the world is what you get back.)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): It's easy to be selfless and put the needs of others before your own today. Look for opportunities to help those who are less fortunate than you.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Discussions with others might be unusual and strange today. People are willing to discuss offbeat things that they normally never mention. (And so are you.)

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You might persuade someone who has influence over others to be kinder or more compassionate. If you have a chance to do this, by all means do so!

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku — By Dave Green

			7	3	1			
		1				2		
	4			9			6	
		5				4		
			6	7	3			
		7				8		
	9			2			7	
		2				3		
			4	6	8			

Difficulty Level ★★★

12/13

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

1	9	6	8	4	7	2	3	5
5	7	4	2	3	1	6	8	9
8	3	2	9	5	6	1	4	7
9	4	5	1	2	3	8	7	6
3	6	8	5	7	9	4	1	2
7	2	1	4	6	8	5	9	3
6	8	7	3	1	2	9	5	4
4	1	3	6	9	5	7	2	8
2	5	9	7	8	4	3	6	1

Difficulty Level ★★★ 12/12

Essence of genius focus of new series

LAST DEC. 3, WE RUSHED home to catch "My Brilliant Brain" on the National Geographic Channel. The new documentary series appealed to us because it investigates the essence and development of genius.

We find the subject particularly interesting in the light of an earlier observation by an expert on human intelligence that we make good use of only a *fraction* of our brains' potential, so much more work can, and needs to, be done.

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

Phenomenal

True enough, last Monday's episode focused on a young woman trained by her father to become a world-class chess player. Her achievement is regarded as phenomenal because, not so long ago, chess experts felt that no woman could excel in the sport.

They attributed this to the perceived difference in the ways boys' and girls' brains were "wired." But the female grandmaster's success has shown that "nature-linked factors" can be circumvented by "nurture."

In this instance, the development came in the form of six-hour tutorial sessions every day, during which the girl was taken by her father through the "history" of chess, especially the thousands of actual games that exemplified the many different moves a player could choose to take, to emerge victorious in all sorts of situations.

Thus, when the little girl started competing in tournaments, she brought along with her, not just her natural aptitude for chess, but also a deep and broad understanding of the possibilities of the sport—up to the point when she didn't even have to think about her moves.

Instead, she relied on a sort of "trained intuition," based on her extensive knowledge of a great variety of actual games played by grandmasters throughout the history of the sport.

The episode's point was that "genius" can be developed. It showed how the girl's rigorous training had made her brain develop in a way that made it easy for her to instantly access all the knowledge she had gained, so she could "intuit" how a new game should be played—and won.

While the episode was distinctly positive in its view of the accessibility and attainability of genius, it also underscored the fact that developing it could be exceedingly difficult.

Exceptions

It required the female grandmaster to devote practically the whole day to studying her chosen sport.

How many youths would be as focused? How many mentors would devote their time to the development of genius? The answers help explain why geniuses are more the exceptions than the desultory rule.

But, the lessons taught by "My Brilliant Brain" could motivate more people to do what it takes to develop their own intellectual potential—and that's all to the good!

ALWAYS the life of the party, "Duets" champ Tessa Prieto-Valdes shares the stage with "Bubble Gang's" Ogie Alcasid NIÑO JESUS ORBETA

Welcome to the PDI Entertainment Hub

PAOLO Prieto, INQUIRER.net president, with Iris Desvarro of Classifieds Cubao branch. RYAN LIM

THE INQUIRER BUILDING IN Makati City turned into an entertainment hub on Saturday as big-name celebrities turned up for our 22nd anniversary party.

Bossa nova diva Sitti kicked off the program with the new INQUIRER theme song, "One Inquirer," about the convergence of subsidiaries into one group.

"Pinoy Pop Superstar's" Jonalyn Viray and Brenan Espartinez, both Hollywood Olympic champions, sustained the momentum, engaging the crowd with their powerful pipes. As did young singing group Sugar Pop, composed of "Pop Star Kids" finalists, whose amazing vocal acrobatics were fully appreciated.

The men in the audience cheered wildly at the mere sight of captivating "Starstruck" alumnae Katrina Halili, Iwa Moto and Jewel Mische. The trio heated up the INQUIRER stage, to say the very least.

As for the women, they got their share of eye candy with former "Pinoy Big Brother" housemate Kian Kazemi, and the all-male group "Studs" made up of "Starstruck" graduates Mike Tan and Dion Ignacio and GMA talents Kevin Roco and Edgar Guzman.

PDI president Sandy Prieto-Romualdez NIÑO JESUS ORBETA

But the virtual gender-divide was breached by Bamboo, whose renditions of "Probinsyana," "Tatsulok" and "Noypi" made both men and women—including top execs—rise from their seats to sing along and dance.

It was surely a tough act to follow, but Bayang Barios gave an equally spirited performance of her own hits.

Funny men Ogie Alcasid and Michael V traded punch lines with program hosts Aries Espinosa, Edna Garcia and Armin Adina.

The "Bubble Gang" duo also posed for snapshots with the audience, and jammed with INQUIRER columnist Tessa Prieto-Valdes, "Celebrity Duets" grand champion.

The program was peppered with games, raffle draws and department presentations—party staples that INQUIRER employees look forward to year after year, along with the celebrity sightings.

PDI CHAIR Marixi Prieto, left, and editor in chief Letty Jimenez-Magsanoc NIÑO JESUS ORBETA

BELTERS Brenan Espartinez, left, and Jonalyn Viray NIÑO JESUS ORBETA

KATRINA Halili, right, gives news day desk chief Ruben Alabastro his raffle prize. RYAN LIM

MICHAEL V, center, joins the Classifieds staff, grand prize winner in the talent competition for employees. NIÑO JESUS ORBETA

IWA MOTO RYAN LIM

BAMBOO ROCKS, and everyone wants a piece of him. ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

MAKATI Mayor Jejomar Binay—left, with emcee Armin Adina—raffles off P8,000 from his own pocket. NIÑO JESUS ORBETA

SUGAR POP is all things nice, indeed. NIÑO JESUS ORBETA

Friday, December 14, 2007 ★★ 26 sections / Vol. 23 / No. 6 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

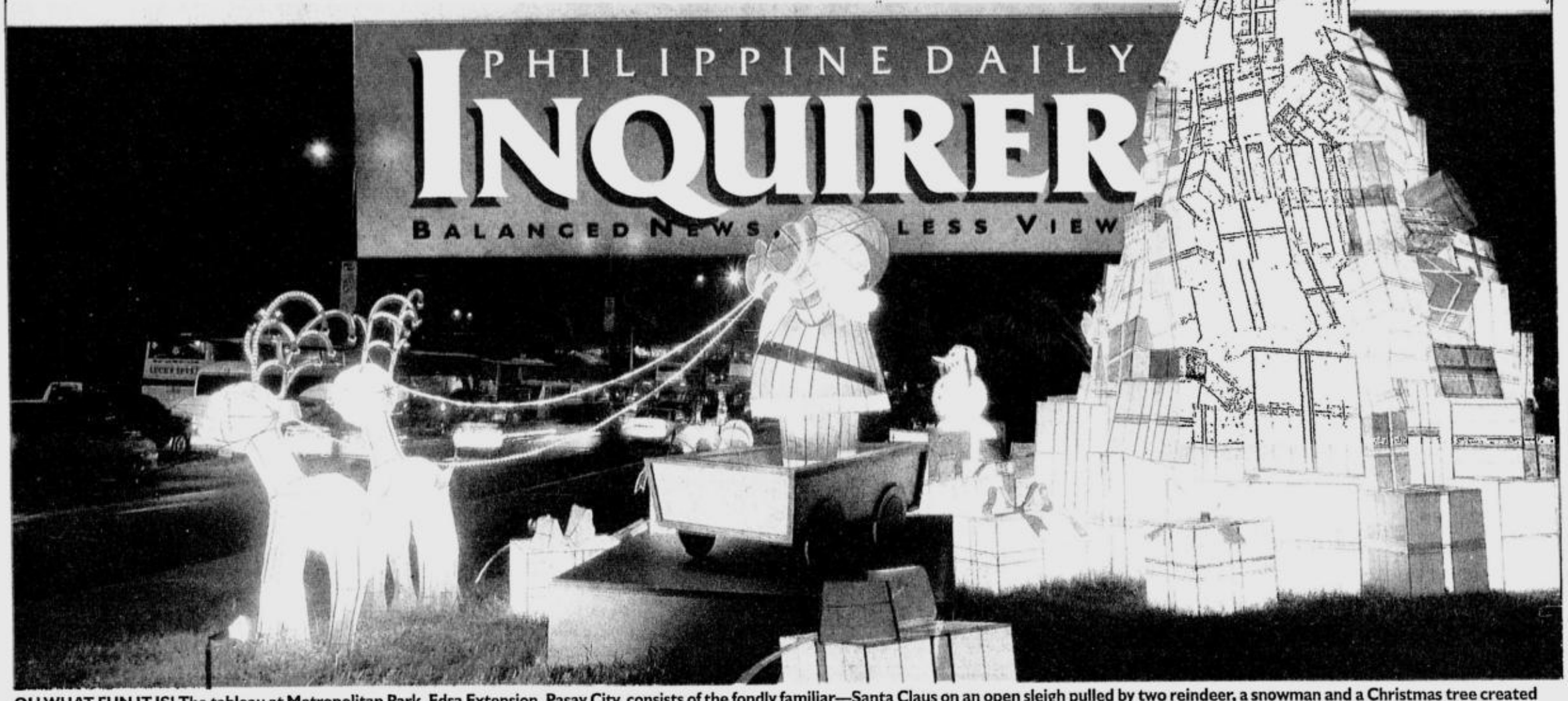
Comelec orders recount of Jaworski's votes vs Eusebio
METRO / A25

Peso seen to rise to 40:$1 due to OFW strong holiday inflows
BUSINESS / B1

PDI's man in Hollywood talks to queen of talk, Oprah
ENTERTAINMENT / M4

900 Mecca pilgrims stranded
ACROSS / A17

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, LESS VIEW



OH WHAT FUN IT IS! The tableau at Metropolitan Park, Edsa Extension, Pasay City, consists of the fondly familiar—Santa Claus on an open sleigh pulled by two reindeer, a snowman and a Christmas tree created out of gift boxes wrapped in vinyl. They're all pulled together by that magic that's beyond all telling, that magic only the birth of Jesus can bring. JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

GMA seeks return of subversion law

Ceasefire with Reds starts Dec. 16, ends Jan. 6

By Christine O. Avendaño

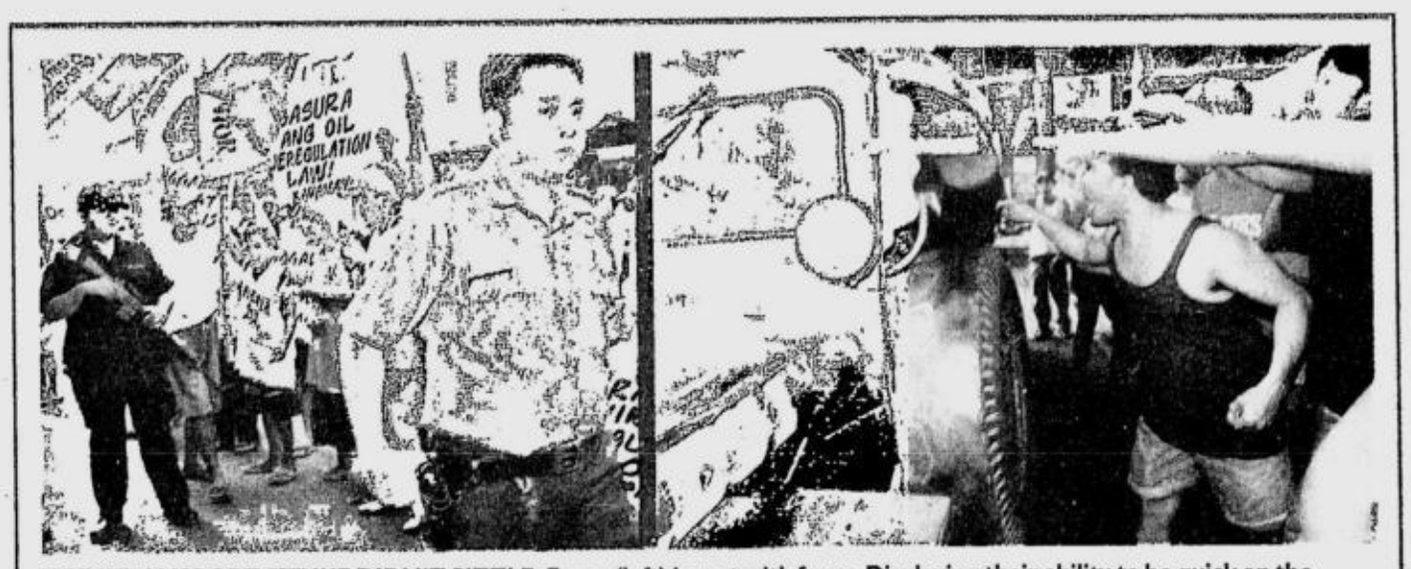
PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo yesterday said she was supporting the revival of the Anti-Subversion Law, which punishes membership in the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), to help put an end to the communist insurgency.

The law, or Republic Act No. 1700, was repealed in 1992. (*See In the Know on Page A10.*)

Also yesterday, the President approved in the spirit of the Yuletide season a three-week truce in the government's 38-year fight against communist rebels. The truce will run from Dec. 16 to Jan. 6.

But the President again vowed to get rid of the communist rebels before she steps down in 2010. She said their "ideological nonsense" and "criminal acts" must be stopped "once and for all."

Ms Arroyo said she would support a
GMA SEEKS/ A10



WHY TRANSPORT STRIKE DIDN'T SIZZLE: Force (left) is met with force. Displaying their ability to be quick on the draw, cops secure the Monumento area where impassioned jeepney drivers hold a protest rally and try to stop their colleagues from plying their routes in the city. *(See story on Page A2.)* JOAN BONDOC

MANILA PEN REVOLT

18 civilians freed; Trillanes, Lim charged

By DJ Yap

ONLY SEN. ANTONIO TRILLANES IV and the uniformed participants of the Nov. 29 failed revolt at the Peninsula Manila in Makati City will stand trial on charges of rebellion.

Judge Elmo Alameda of the Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 150 has dismissed the rebellion charges filed against 18 civilians who joined the seven-hour takeover of the hotel, including former Vice President Teofisto Guingona and Bishop Julio Labayen, and ordered the release of 14 still in detention.

Alameda upheld the Department of Justice resolution finding probable cause to indict Trillanes, Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim and 16 junior military officers for rebellion, which is punishable by life imprisonment.

Alameda ordered the chief of the Camp Crame Custodial Center to release the 14 civilians still detained there, including "running priest" Robert Reyes, lawyers Argee Guevarra and JV Bautista, and Trillanes' brother Antonio Trillanes III.
18 CIVILIANS / A23

Opposition senators vow: Razon won't run power grid

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

OPPOSITION SENATORS YESTERDAY warned that President Macapagal-Arroyo's political ally, businessman Enrique Razon, and his Monte Oro consortium would have to pass through the eye of a needle before they could get the 25-year franchise to run the country's power grids.

"The Senate should not give Monte Oro the luxury of securing a franchise under these anomalous circumstances," Sen. Jamby Madrigal said, charging that Tuesday's bidding for the assets of National Transmission Corp. (Transco), won by Monte Oro, was rigged.

"I strongly oppose the granting of a franchise and I will exhaust all legal remedies to prevent it. Not under my watch will I allow them to have a fran-
OPPOSITION/ A8

Malacañang on warpath, tags Serge O

By Christine O. Avendaño and Kate Pedroso

CONTINUING ITS ATTACK ON A SURvey that found a big percentage of the respondents considered President Macapagal-Arroyo the "most corrupt" leader in Philippine history, Malacañang yesterday named a former opposition senator as the one who commissioned the survey.

"It was actually a commissioned question by Serge Osmeña and was not an official release by Pulse," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said of the Pulse Asia Inc. poll which showed that more Filipinos (42 percent) viewed Ms Arroyo and her administration as the most corrupt compared with her four
MALACAÑANG/ A9

GMA to meet Sumilao farmers on Monday

By Christine O. Avendaño

THE SUMILAO FARMERS, WHO HAD staged a 1,700-kilometer protest march from their hometown to Manila but were denied entry to Malacañang last week, will finally have an audience with President Macapagal-Arroyo on Monday, a Palace official said yesterday.

The President will have a dialogue with the weary marchers from Bukidnon in Malacañang at 11:30 a.m., according to Presidential Management Staff chief Cerge Remonde.

"The farmers wanted to see her and the President is willing to meet and lis-
GMA TO MEET/ A8

RP boxers shake Games with a protest punch

By Recah Trinidad

NAKHON RATCHASIMA, THAILAND —Protest walkouts in two of seven title fights by the Philippine team yesterday landed like a foul blow and rocked the boxing championships in the 24th Southeast Asian Games.

The ring competitions were dominated by the host Thais, who bagged a record 16 gold medals against only one by the dethroned Filipinos.

After Thailand captured the first two gold medals in the pinweight and light flyweight divisions, championship action was rudely jolted inside the full-house Meaungpug Municipal Gymnasium here when Filipino flyweight Godfrey Castro spat out his mouthpiece and pulled off his gloves at the sound of the bell in his bout against
RP BOXERS/ A10

Media assert rights, role in a democracy

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

PRINT AND BROADCAST JOURNALists yesterday asserted their right to decide on their own safety while covering police or military operations, without being threatened or arrested if they choose not to leave a coverage area.
MEDIA/ A23

EU threatens to boycott US climate talks

BALI, INDONESIA—EUROPEAN NAtions threatened to boycott US-led climate talks next month unless Washington accepts a range of numbers for negotiating deep reductions of global-warming emissions at a UN conference here.

The move on Thursday raised the stakes as delegates from nearly 190 nations entered final-hour talks aimed at launching negotiations for a successor to the Kyoto Protocol.

The United States, Japan and several other governments refuse to accept the language in a draft document suggesting that industrialized nations consider cutting emissions by 25 to 40 percent by 2020, saying specific targets would limit the scope of future talks.

The European Union and others say the figures reflect the measures scientists say are needed to rein in global warming and head off predictions of rising sea levels, worsening floods and droughts, and the extinction of plant
EU THREATENS/ A5

'Danger: Avoid Death' is wacky warning winner

DETROIT—A WARNING ON A SMALL tractor that reads "Danger: Avoid Death" was named yesterday as the United States' wackiest warning label by an antilawsuit group.

The Wacky Warning Label Contest, now on its 11th year, is conducted by
DANGER/ A8

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2007

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern and Eastern Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. Visayas and Mindanao will have cloudy skies with scaterred rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy skies.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Mostly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Mostly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Mostly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

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Transport strike fizzles out

Piston leaders claim victory, say action delivered strong message

By Tina G. Santos, Nancy Carvajal, Alcuin Papa and Julie M. Aurelio

THE TRANSPORT STRIKE yesterday was hardly felt in Metro Manila as hundreds of jeepneys continued to ply their routes and most major transport groups declined to join the protest action called by the militant Pinagkaisang Samahan ng Tsuper at Operator Nationwide (Piston).

Though many commuters were unable to make it to work on time as the strike affected key routes like Edsa, they were not completely paralyzed as trucks and buses deployed by police, local governments and various government agencies roamed the city picking up stranded commuters.

And except for initial early reports of striking drivers coercing other drivers to join the strike, Philippine National Police said the strike was "generally peaceful."

The story was mixed in the rest of the country, with striking transport groups claiming to have paralyzed from 80 percent to 98 percent of transportation in provinces like Laguna, Batangas, the Bicol region, Negros Occidental, Capiz and Aklan, leaving hundreds of stranded commuters. In Baguio City, most drivers either stayed home or continued plying their routes, in Zambales and Cebu no strike was called and in Rizal, only about 60 percent of drivers stayed off the streets.

Most transport operations were back to normal by noon and 3 p.m. in Metro Manila and other parts of the country, earlier than the 5 p.m. scheduled by Piston leaders to end the strike.

However, Piston secretary general George San Mateo was unruffled, claiming that Piston had scored an average "90 to 95 percent transport paralysis nationwide," including 70 to 90 percent in Metro Manila.

Modesto Florande, Piston's NCR chief, said the strike was successful because it "sent a strong message to our leaders and the oil companies that the grassroots members will not sit in the sidelines anymore."

Florande also denied that Piston was cutting short its strike because it was abandoned by other transport groups.

"The strike in Metro Manila was really just for today. In provinces such as Iloilo, the strikes will take place today and tomorrow. There are also areas that will only start tomorrow. We have the support of transport group members and civic groups," Florande said.

The militant drivers want government to repeal the Oil Deregulation Law, restrict oil price hikes and scrap the 12 percent expanded value-added tax on oil products.

But leaders of some eight major transport groups declined to join the protest action, saying they preferred to continue talks with government to bring down fuel costs, curb extortion and illegal operators and finalize the single-ticketing system for traffic violations.

Though commuters were inconvenienced by the strike, they also found it to be enjoyable because of the free rides.

"They can strike all they want if the rides are free," said Fe Manaog of Valenzuela in Filipino.

Early yesterday, striking drivers could be seen urging other drivers still plying their routes to join the strike. They also urged commuters and pedestrians to join the protest against oil price increase. They were mostly ignored.

Alvin Flores, a jeepney driver who continued to pick up passengers in the Monumento-Divisoria route, said he would eventually stop, when he earned enough money to buy milk.

According to the Northern Police District, the protest action failed to completely paralyze transportation in the cities of Caloocan, Malabon, Navotas and Valenzuela,

Except for the Monumento-Polo route, where there was an almost a hundred percent participation of passenger jeepney drivers, other areas remained accessible by public transport, the police said.

By 1:15 p.m., the traffic operations center in Caloocan City reported that jeepneys were back on the street, and the situation was "back to normal."

National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) chief Director Geary Barias said the strike paralyzed an estimated 20 percent of Metro Manila's transport system.

He said areas where jeepneys were scarce included the routes of Malabon-Divisoria, Cubao-Marikina, and the UP Campus to Philcoa.

"But in these areas, there were buses and other jeepneys who were able to ply the routes," Barias said.

Barias said police did not make a single arrest during the strike.

Police went on full alert ahead of the strike for fear that striking public utility vehicle drivers would harass non-striking drivers. *With reports from Kristine Alava and Riza T. Olchondra, Metro Manila and Inquirer Northern Luzon, Southern Luzon, Visayas*

WHAT'S INSIDE

GADHAFI SON calls on GMA, receives Congress award /A13

BLAME GOES around over cheap meds bill /A4

ESPERON: I'm ready to go with clear conscience /A6

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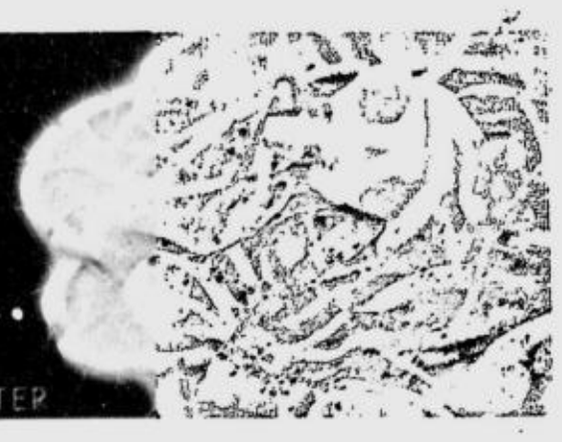

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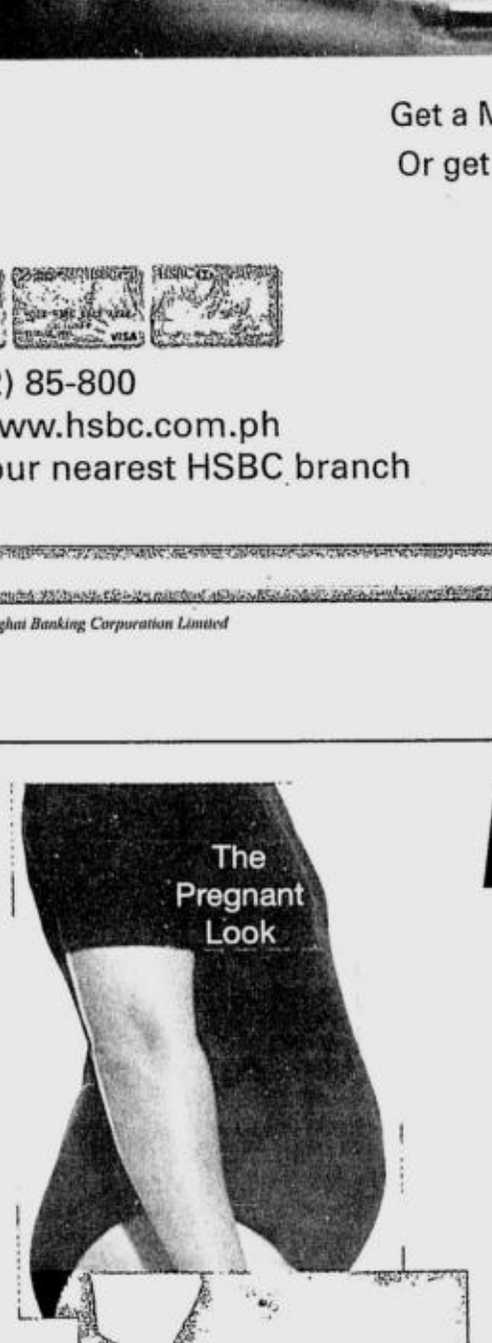

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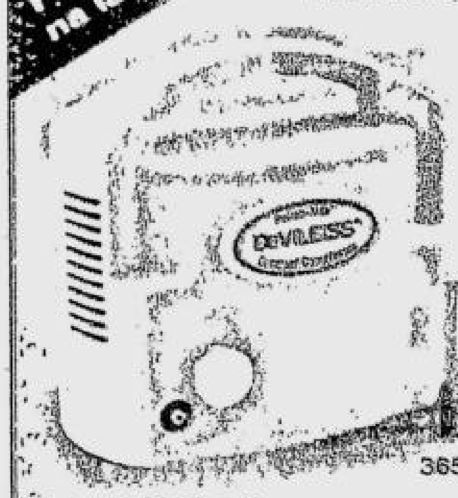

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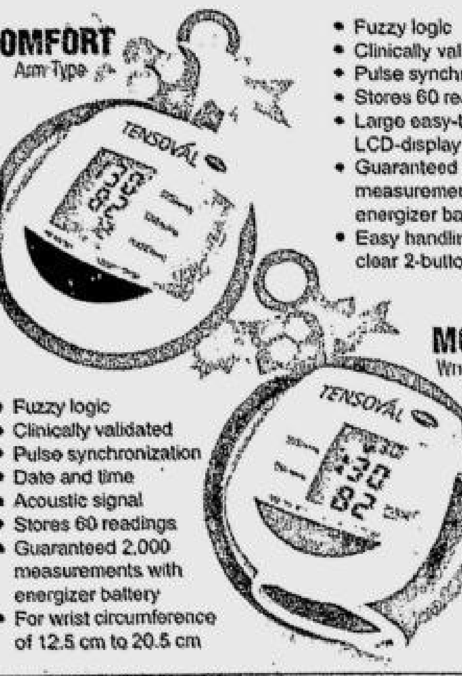

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Blame goes around over cheap meds bill

By Christian V. Esguerra

WHO OR WHAT IS BLOCKING THE PASsage of the cheaper medicines bill in the House of Representatives?

Is it Minority Leader Ronaldo Zamora or Cebu Rep. Pablo Garcia? The two senior lawmakers have raised a number of objections to the landmark measure. Or is it something else?

Majority Leader Arthur Defensor yesterday assured the public the measure, known as House Bill No. 2844, would pass on second reading on Monday, three days before Congress goes on holiday break.

"We will prevent any attempt to further delay passage of the bill," Defensor told the INQUIRER. "We are very much aware this is a very important bill awaited by our people."

Quorum lack

Zamora said the problem lay not with him or Garcia but with the House leadership which has failed to muster a quorum.

"It's not an issue of failing to get past Zamora or Garcia," he told the INQUIRER. "They should get people in the session hall and make sure they stay there."

With its numbers, the majority could easily quash any objections to the bill and pass it in no time, he said.

But a problem with the numbers—the same stumbling block to the bill's passage in the previous Congress—resurfaced Tuesday night.

While more than enough congressmen showed up for the roll call, their numbers soon dwindled until Garcia threatened to question the quorum.

The threat came after the committee on trade and industry rejected amendments Garcia had proposed, according to two congressmen. In such an instance, the way to resolve the impasse is to put the matter to a plenary vote, the two said.

Under House rules, a quorum is presumed until it is questioned and proven that there are not enough lawmakers in the session hall.

'Asking to be heard'

Zamora said he was willing to put his objections to the bill to a vote and let the House as a whole settle the matter.

"All I'm asking for is to be heard," he said. "Then we go to a vote. If I lose, that's it."

Zamora said the House leadership had a problem with getting Garcia to cooperate on HB 2844. He said Garcia had the support of some members of the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi) party of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"There's really a problem within the majority," he said.

Defensor said the House leadership had a "strategy" to make sure HB 2844 hurdled any objections on Monday.

He declined to elaborate, but one administration lawmaker said it would basically involve the majority using strength of numbers to overwhelm any objections during the vote.

Zamora wants deleted a paragraph in the proposed amendment to the Intellectual Property Code which states: "For the purpose of this clause, salts, esters, ethers, polymorphs, metabolites, pure form, particle size, isomers, mixtures of isomers, complexes, combinations and other derivatives of a known substance shall be considered to be the same substance, unless they differ significantly in properties with regard to efficacy."

Proponents of HB 2844 like Iloilo Rep. Ferjenel Biron want to keep the paragraph, partly to keep multinational drug companies from combining two or more substances and producing basically the same medicine, and seeking a patent for it.

POTC told to surrender P150M

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE SANDIGANBAYAN HAS ordered the Philippine Overseas Telecommunications Corp. to hand over to the antigraft court the P150 million in cash dividends the telephone company owes to government-sequestered shares.

In a 23-page ruling, the antigraft court's Third Division stated that the dividends should be put its custody in an escrow account at the Land Bank of the Philippines until it ruled on its ownership.

In affirming the Presidential Commission on Good Government's sequestration of shareholder Polygon Investors and Managers Inc., the court also resolved that the government has the right to demand the turnover of the dividends to the court for safekeeping.

The PCGG sequestered the Polygon along with several other firms of the late businessman Jose Africa on claims that his business enterprises were partially aided by the ill-gotten wealth of the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Friday, December 14, 2007
2nd Week of Advent
John of the Cross

1st Reading: Is 48:17-19
Gospel: Matthew 11:16-19

Jesus said to the crowds, "Now, to what can I compare the people of this day? They are like children sitting in the marketplace, about whom their companions complain: 'We played the flute for you but you would not dance. We sang a funeral-song but you would not cry!'

"For John came fasting and people said: 'He is possessed.' Then the Son of Man came, he ate and drank, and people said: 'Look at this man! A glutton and drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet the outcome will prove Wisdom to be right."

Commentary

Do we let God teach us and lead us where we should go? Do we hearken to God's commandments and remember that our God is the Holy One? Is our name always in the presence of God because of our goodness or because of our lack of response to God's Word? Are we children squatting in the street and moaning and groaning about life? Do we find something wrong with absolutely everyone—whether they come like John the Baptist or they come like Jesus, the Son of Man? Where is our wisdom—staked on the person of Jesus who comes to sinners, forgiving, and preaching the Word of truth, or with the world that says something different and ignores those who obey God?

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EU threatens to boycott ...

From page A1

and animal species.

"No result in Bali means no Major Economies Meeting," said Sigmar Gabriel, a top EU environment official from Germany, referring to a series of separate climate talks initiated by US President George W. Bush in September.

"This is the clear position of the EU. I do not know what we should talk about if there is no target."

The United States invited 16 other major economies, including European countries, Japan, China and India, to discuss a program of what are expected to be nationally determined, voluntary cutbacks in greenhouse gas emissions.

House of cards

The Bush administration views the major economies process as the main vehicle for determining future steps by the United States—and it hopes by others—to slow emissions.

But environmentalists accuse the United States of trying to undermine the UN process.

The talks in Bali are scheduled to wrap up on Friday.

But UN climate chief Yvo de Boer said he was worried the US-EU deadlock could derail the process and that a final "Bali roadmap" would contain an agreement to negotiate a new climate deal by 2009, but may not include specific targets for emission reductions.

"I'm very concerned about the pace of things," De Boer said. "If we don't get wording on the future, then the whole house of cards falls to pieces."

No. 1 polluter

The US delegation said while it continued to reject inclusion of specific emission cut targets, it hoped eventually to reach an agreement that is "environmentally effective" and "economically sustainable."

But haggling over numbers now was counterproductive, said Jim Connaughton, chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality.

The United States is the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases and the only major industrial country to have rejected Kyoto, which expires in 2012. It has been on the defensive since the conference

SLOW AS A TURTLE?: The head of the UN's climate change summit in Bali is worried that actions are not being taken fast enough against global warming with less than a day left to conclude an agreement. An environmental activist releases a turtle at a beach near the summit venue. AFP

kicked off on Dec. 3.

Pressure has come even from a one-time ally on climate, Australia, whose new prime minister, Kevin Rudd, urged Washington to "embrace" binding targets, and from former US Vice President Al Gore, who won this year's Nobel Peace Prize for helping alert the world to the danger of climate change.

US wrecking crew

But US Undersecretary of State Paula Dobriansky, the head of the American delegation, told reporters that the conference was simply the start of negotiations, not the end.

"We don't have to resolve all these issues ... here in Bali," she said.

That did not satisfy environmentalists, who accused Washington of standing in the way of a meaningful deal—and not just on the inclusion of emissions targets.

"We know that there is a wrecking crew in Bali led by the US administration and its minions," said Jennifer Morgan, spokesperson for environmental groups on Bali.

"They are working hard to pull out the bits of text that matter to developing countries on finance and technology."

Looking beyond Bush

Some delegates say US clout is on the wane as countries look beyond the Bush era.

They say that with US elections due to take place less than 11 months from now, it leaves Bush a lame duck when it comes to shaping the climate change agenda.

"As we think about how to frame these negotiations, and to reach an agreement, let's think in terms of the future leadership of the US," said James Leape, head of the conservation group WWF.

"Because that will be a different generation and that will almost certainly be leadership that is serious about climate change."

A climate pariah

For supporters of the Kyoto Protocol—which was almost wrecked by Bush's rejection in 2001—the next White House incumbent is bound to want to end America's long years as a climate pariah.

At best, they hope, he or she could steer the world's No. 1 carbon polluter back into the fold of industrialized nations that commit to targeted cuts in their CO2 emissions.

"Whoever will be the next president, he will be not as far from the climate negotiations as the president we have," German Environment Minister Sigmar Gabriel said.

Kyoto Protocol

The Kyoto Protocol requires 37 industrial nations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by a relatively modest average 5 percent below 1990 levels by 2012.

Bush has argued that the pact would harm the US economy and cutbacks should have been imposed on poorer but fast-developing nations such as China and India.

Gore and Senator John Kerry, the two men Bush defeated for the White House, have both visited Bali to remind nations the clock was ticking for the US leader.

Connaughton, one of the US negotiators, remained defiant.

US can't be ignored

"The US will lead, and we will continue to lead, but leadership also requires others to fall in line and follow," he told reporters.

A European diplomat said the US delegation "is heard but not listened to." He meant the United States could not be ignored, given its gigantic economy and the fact no climate solution can be envisaged without its help.

Despite its loss of influence, Washington is not alone on some positions.

Its argument that emerging giants should be coaxed into tougher curbs has gained traction, given that China may already have overtaken the United States as the world's biggest emitter. *Reports from AP and AFP*

WHO says millions will be at risk from malaria, diarrhea

NUSA DUA, INDONESIA—Millions more people will be at risk from illnesses such as malaria and diarrhea in a warming world beset by heat waves and water shortages, the World Health Organization said on Thursday.

Climate experts say rising temperatures and heat waves will increase the number of heat-related deaths, while higher ozone levels from pollution will mean more people suffering from cardio-respiratory disease.

A warming world would also mean the spread of vector-borne and pathogenic diseases such as malaria, dengue fever and cholera.

"Some of the major killers are climate sensitive," Maria Neira, the World Health Organisation's director for public health and the environment, said at climate talks in Bali.

"We are concerned about malnutrition related to lack of agricultural production, we are concerned about diarrhea due to water scarcity and sanitation, and about seeing an increase in dengue and malaria and their appearance in areas where it was not present," she said.

"The health costs of inaction will be the incidence of injuries and death by natural disasters and heat waves or displacement of people."

Neira told the climate talks on the Indonesian resort island of Bali a one-degree Celsius increase in temperature would lead to an 8-percent increase in the incidence of diarrhea.

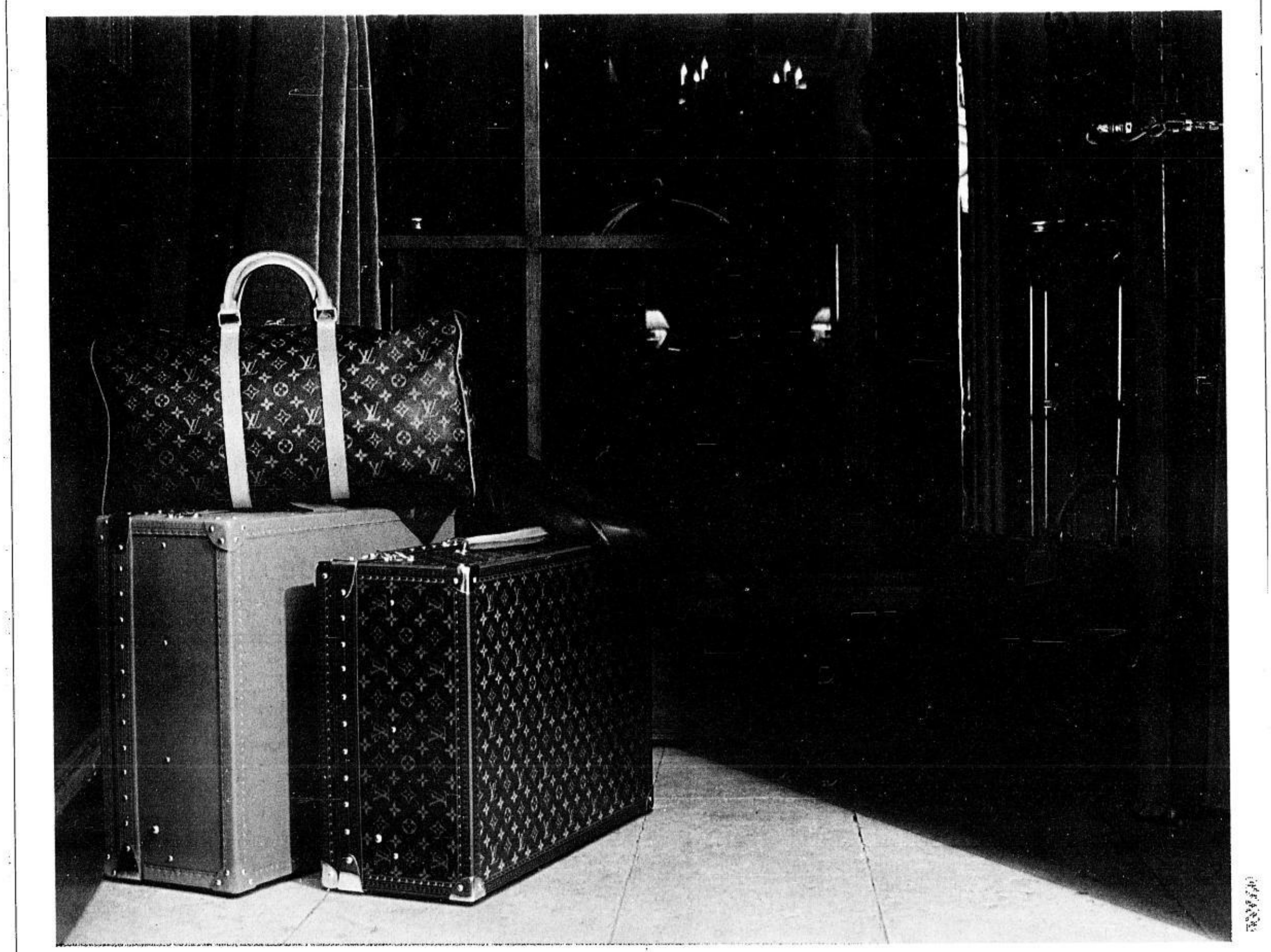
Climate change was also expected to increase the proportion of the global population exposed to dengue, a disease carried by mosquitoes, by between 50 and 60 percent.

The 190-nation UN climate meeting in Bali from Dec. 3 to 14 is seeking to launch two years of formal negotiations meant to end with agreement on a broad new UN pact to fight global warming, which is linked with rising sea levels, floods and melting glaciers.

In the past, experts have said South Asia is particularly at risk.

The region's flood-prone, low-lying countries such as Bangladesh, melting Himalayan glaciers, desert areas and large coastal cities mean disease could spread quickly and exacerbate malnutrition.

"The health system will be totally overwhelmed and not able to respond and maybe undermine the health benefits until now," said Neira. *Reuters*



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RETIRING IN FEBRUARY

Esperon: I'm ready to go with clear conscience

By Nikko Dizon

ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. said he is ready to retire in February, his conscience clear of the "Hello Garci" scandal that linked him to purported cheating in the 2004 election in favor of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"If I will be extended, it will be an honor. But you know I don't see it on the horizon," Esperon said, after he was asked at a news forum about rumors his year-and-a-half term was likely to be extended by the President.

On Feb. 9 Esperon turns 56, the mandatory retirement age for members of the AFP. Esperon will have served 33 years in the military, four years and eight months of that in the field.

He said there were "a lot of competent" officers who could take over from him. But with two months to go, no names have surfaced, except for that of Army chief Lt. Gen. Alexander Yano.

By tradition, the commanders of the Army, Navy and Air Force, as well as the Vice Chief of Staff, The Deputy Chief of Staff and three-star generals are contenders.

Esperon said he would be relinquishing his post with a clear conscience over allegations of his involvement in election fraud in 2004.

"I never took it as a stigma, my conscience is clear," he said.

Esperon was among four generals mentioned in the "Hello Garci" wiretapped conversations between President Arroyo and a man widely believed to be then election commissioner Virgilio Garcillano.

Then the AFP chief for operations, Esperon was also deputy commander of Task Force HOPE (Honest, Orderly and Peaceful Elections) and supervised the troops assisting the Commission on Elections.

"There was the charge I rigged the elections because somebody said he was relieved as brigade commander upon my direction. [Marine Brig. Gen. Francisco] Gudani claimed he was relieved upon my direction," Esperon said.

Esperon denied any hand in the relief of Gudani, who was perceived to be an ardent supporter of Ms Arroyo's strongest rival, actor Fernando Poe Jr.

He said Gudani was relieved "in connection with an investigation of a fire fight that happened on the night of the elections."

A young woman was killed and her death was "blamed" on Marines from Gudani's brigade, Esperon said.

ESPERON

Military rebs may still try again—AFP

By Nikko Dizon

MILITARY LEADERS yesterday said rebellious soldiers could still try to overthrow the government, which is why the Armed Forces should remain vigilant to thwart any such attempt.

"There are still threats. You have to take care of this ... many are going to try," said AFP Chief Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, Jr.

The threat is not imminent, however, said Esperon, adding that the AFP was still trying to verify if these coup plotters are connected to the self-styled Magdalo group of putschists led by Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV.

Esperon said he was confident that any attempt to oust the Arroyo government would fail because soldiers know they have nothing to gain from it.

"The soldiers in the ranks will not join them. They know that they [the leaders] will only abandon them. What happened in 1989? They were abandoned. In Oakwood, what happened? They were abandoned. In 2006, they were abandoned. Those who were lately discharged from the Army, what happened to them?" he said in Filipino.

Esperon has taken a hardline stance against renegade military officers accused of leading the failed attempts to overthrow the government.

He said he had wanted the full force of the law applied on the renegade junior military officers that attempted a coup in July 2003 and not a mere admonition as agreed in the terms of surrender.

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Martin Luther King's son keeps the dream alive

By Beverly T. Natividad

FORTY-FOUR YEARS AGO, HIS FATHER, MARtin Luther King Jr., inspired a generation to realize the dream of a world free of racism.

Several years later, the eldest son of the American civil rights leader said that dream still rings loud and true for this generation, and the path toward it is still faith and service as his father said.

The only difference is that the dream has been concretized by United Nations member states, summed up as the eight Millennium Development Goals, said Martin Luther King III, a peace activist like his father.

These goals, or MDGs, are: the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, the achievement of universal primary education, promotion of gender equality, reduction of child mortality, improvement of maternal health, fighting of HIV/AIDS and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability, and development of a global partnership for development.

In a speech at the opening of the Universal Peace Federation's two-day International Leadership Conference at the Manila Hotel on Tuesday, the younger King said that for all the technological knowhow of today's generation, it is still faith and service that will lead people to triumph over poverty.

"It is faith and service that can win victories in the attainment of MDGs. This will be the flame that could attain the MDGs," said King, a peace activist like his father.

He challenged the present generation to transform its faith into service and commit to the eight development goals.

The leadership conference is being held in conjunction with a five-day Manila Global Peace Festival, which is part of a series of peace festivals that the UPF is conducting worldwide to campaign for support for lasting peace.

The UPF is a global inter-religious alliance that calls for world peace and envisions "a global family of God guided by universal principles."

King said that after all the technological advancement achieved by this generation, it is not anymore a question whether it can reduce poverty but a question of whether it has the will to do so.

Like his father, King encouraged people to live up to and realize their dreams and goals.

In the case of the Philippines, he said Filipinos must use their faith as a Christian country and turn it into service to realize the dream of feeding every hungry child.

For the world, he said, faith must manifest in service to turn deadly arms into "ploughshares of renewal."

King challenged the present generation to fight to save the children from hunger instead of launching wars for revenge.

He said people should now break the chain of endless revenge and retribution into a new framework based on service.

"Hard-fought battles are waged with the sword of service and the shield of faith," added King.

Quoting his father, he said that peace is not built on a negative path. Those who lead with love leave a more lasting legacy, he said.

He said his father once encouraged people to live up to their potential by uniting to act to make the world better and more peaceful. He said his father had stressed that this was the living manifestation of faith.

"Everybody can be great because everybody can serve. You only need a heart full of grace and a soul generated by love," said King.

The UPF's Global Peace Festival kicked off last Sunday with a massive Manila Bay coastline cleanup involving Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim and more than 10,000 volunteers from 39 schools and universities and over 100 community groups.

E. Raposa; 54

EARL A. RAPOSA DIED ON DEC. 10. HE WAS 54. His body lies at the Holy Family Chapel on Cruzada, Legazpi City. Interment will be at the Pristine Memorial Gardens on Saturday, Dec. 15 after the 2 p.m. Mass. He is survived by wife Emerita, children Matet, Janet, Paul and Lizette May; brothers Enrique Jr., Dennis and sister Marilyn; nieces and nephews and in-laws.

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Opposition senators vow: Razon won't run ...

From page A1

chise. I call upon my colleagues to block the granting of a franchise to Monte Oro," Madrigal said.

Madrigal has said that she would go to the Supreme Court to nullify the award of the Transco concession to Monte Oro Grid Resources Corp. and its foreign partner, China's State Grid Corp., which won the auction with a bid of $3.95 billion.

License from Congress

Although Monte Oro won the auction in the biggest privatization in the country's history, it still has to get a license from Congress within one year to operate Transco.

Monte Oro, whose partner is China's largest electricity provider ranked 29th in the Fortune Global 500 list of the world's largest companies, edged San Miguel Energy Corp. of food and beverage conglomerate San Miguel Corp., which offered $3.905 billion.

Two others prequalified to join Tuesday's auction backed out at the last minute. They were the consortium of Two Rivers Pacific Holdings Corp. and Terna-Rete Electtrica Nazionale S.P.A. of Italy and the group of Citadel Holdings Inc. and Power Grid Corp. of India.

Industry sources said that the two groups were pressured to withdraw with a media campaign questioning their eligibility even though Two Rivers was reported to be prepared to bid as much as $4.2 billion.

Broadband capability

La Costa Development Corp., headed by nickel mining magnate Salvador Zamora II and former Finance Secretary Roberto de Ocampo, has sought a writ of preliminary injunction from a Makati court against the auction after it was disqualified earlier. The hearing of the case for violation of the antigraft law will continue next week.

La Costa earlier said it was willing to offer Transco $6 billion, double the offer in a failed bid in February. It said it planned to develop not only Transco's power grid but also its optic fiber broadband capability that would make the franchise holder also a major telecommunications player.

Franchise guaranteed?

Apart from concession fees, the winning bidder will have to invest by 2010 a total of $725 million to upgrade power grids spanning the Philippine archipelago. The proceeds from the concession will be used to pay the $7.2-billion debt of National Power Corp.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson said Monte Oro would have a very difficult time getting a congressional franchise in view of the irregularities that tainted the bidding.

"It's odd, if not strange, that some people would pay $3.9 billion for a public utility firm without the benefit of a franchise, unless Malacañang has guaranteed the grant of a franchise by Congress," Lacson said.

Separation of powers

"Under the principle of separation of powers by two coequal branches of government (this) should not be the case. The worst scenario is if the winning bidders have assumed that they have the members of Congress in their pocket to guarantee the franchise of the Transco franchise," said Lacson.

Madrigal described the Transco auction as "a travesty of justice and shoved by the Arroyo government down the throat of Filipinos with impunity."

"Should Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo help her cronies in securing a franchise through another lutong macao (charade). I will fight them hard and strong with other patriots," said Madrigal.

Rep. Teofisto Guingona III, a member of the House minority in Joint Congressional Power Commission (JCPC), said the award to Monte Oro could still be voided if an investigation uncovered an irregularity in the bidding.

"There is still a long way to go before they can operate," he said.

Razon ally

The group of Razon, who heads port operator International Container Terminal Services Inc. (ICTSI) and served as treasurer of the administration coalition Team Unity in the May elections, yesterday found a rare ally in Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago.

Santiago, cochair of JCPC, concurred with Jose Ibazeta, president of Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM), the agency tasked with privatizing Transco. Ibazeta said that there was nothing anomalous in his continued stay as director of Razon's companies while overseeing the sale of Transco.

Santiago pointed out that Razon was the chair of a port terminal services corporation while Monte Oro is dealing with the power sector.

"I don't see any conflict between terminal services and the power sector. Besides, he inhibited himself from the bidding process because of the ethical question that has been raised," Santiago said.

"Unless there is further evidence, we find that he has acquitted himself successfully on the charge of conflict of interest. Whether there is any irregularity in the bidding process itself or in the projected dire consequences of the sale to this winning bidder, that will be taken up by another committee," she added.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez challenged opposition senators to prove their charges that Tuesday's auction was rigged.

"Monte Oro Grid Resources was the highest bidder. How can it be *lutong macao*?" Gonzalez told reporters.

On Razon's involvement in Monte Oro, Gonzalez said: "Does it mean that just because he was there, you would have to disqualify the highest bid?"

Asked about Madrigal's plan to file a class action suit to nullify the auction, Gonzalez said: "The opposition can always file anything. They will never be satisfied anyway."

Buboy legit businessman

Gonzalez also said he did not see any problem about the involvement of Ms Arroyo's brother, Diosdado "Buboy" Macapagal Jr., and the Aboitiz family, a known administration ally, in Monte Oro.

"He is a legitimate businessman," Gonzalez said.

"It was the corporation that participated and the personality of the corporation is different from the individual's. Assuming that he participated, it is unfair just because he is the brother of the President."

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye rejected the allegation, saying the opposition always insinuated corruption in almost all government deals.

"Can they match the price? Tell Jamby, even to her we will award it if she can match the price," Bunye said.

Presidential aide Cerge Remonde said the bidding was conducted "fair and square regardless of who wins." He said Buboy Arroyo had nothing to do with the process. *With reports from Margaux C. Ortiz and Norman Bordadora, AP*

San Miguel concedes to Monte Oro

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

FOOD AND BEVERAGE GIANT San Miguel Corp. (SMC) has conceded to Monte Oro Grid Resources Corp., saying it won "fair and square" Tuesday's bidding for the country's power grids owned by National Transmission Corp. (Transco) by a slim $45-million margin.

San Miguel president Ramon Ang said in a text message to the INQUIRER that San Miguel Energy Corp., SMC's investment vehicle for its power ventures, lost to the Monte Oro Group of businessmen Walter Brown and Enrique Razon.

"They won fair and square. They gave better value," Ang said.

Ang also said that San Miguel Energy Corp. was not contemplating a partnership with the Monte Oro Group at this time.

Monte Oro has announced plans for an initial public offering (IPO) of shares in the stock market to raise funds for its acquisition of Transco.

Stocks of companies involved in the Monte Oro consortium were the market's biggest winners yesterday.

Biggest gainers

Shares of holding firm A. Brown Co. Inc. were the biggest gainers after the price of a share rose 49.3 percent to P2.12.

A. Brown has an 18-percent stake in Monte Oro Resources and Energy Inc. (MORE), the parent firm of Monte Oro Grid Resources Corp.

Shares of Philippine Realty & Holdings Corp. of Campos Lanuza & Co. Inc. and A. Brown, also rose 19.57 percent to close at 55 centavos and was the fourth largest gainer.

iVantage Corp., which is associated with stockbroker Wealth Securities, climbed 16 percent or 24 centavos to close at P1.74 and was the sixth biggest gainer.

Other shareholders

Aside from A. Brown, other shareholders of MORE are Wealth Securities with 32 percent or 163.95 million shares, Campos Lanuza & Co. Inc. with 77 million shares and Lakeland Village Holdings as well as Evergrow Industries and Sureste Properties, each with 4.9 percent or 25 million shares, Securities and Exchange Commission documents showed.

The consortia of Monte Oro Grid, Calaca High Power Corp. and State Grid Corp. of China won the Transco bid for $3.95 billion. Calaca High Power Corp. is 96-percent owned by veteran Manila broker Robert Coyiuto Jr.

'Danger: Avoid Death' ...

From page A1

Michigan Lawsuit Abuse Watch as part of an effort to show the effects of lawsuits on product warning labels.

Kevin Soave won the $500 grand prize for submitting the winning label.

Second place went to a label on an iron-on T-shirt transfer that warns: "Do not iron while wearing shirt."

Third prize went for a label on a baby stroller featuring a small storage pouch that warns: "Do not put child in bag."

Contest organizer Bob Dorigo Jones said the silly labels reflected how broken America's civil justice system was.

Predatory lawyers

"Predatory lawyers know they can file ridiculous lawsuits against innocent product makers and blackmail them into a cash settlement—even in cases in which a user has ignored common sense," Dorigo Jones said in a statement yesterday.

Those who oppose the contest said that while some warning labels may seem silly, even dumb warnings could save lives.

"Warning labels save lives, so it's shameful that this group would make fun of them in order to further its campaign to weaken our civil justice system," said Kathleen Flynn Peterson, president of the American Association for Justice, a trial lawyers group.

Honorable mention went to Cyndi LaMonde of Traverse City, Michigan, for a label on a letter opener that says: "Caution: Safety goggles recommended."

Vanishing fabric marker

New York state resident Ann Marie Young took the second honorable mention for a warning she found which cautions users: "The Vanishing Fabric Marker should not be used as a writing instrument for signing checks or any legal documents."

The group selected a list of finalists and listeners of radio station WOMC-FM's Dick Purtan show chose the winners. *AP*

GMA to meet Sumilao farmers

From page A1

ten to the farmers and do her best to do justice for all," Remonde said in a phone interview.

The PMS chief made the announcement hours after the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) on Thursday issued a status quo order on the disputed 144-hectare farm in Sumilao town in Bukidnon, which has been sold to San Miguel Corp. (SMC). *(See related story on Page A24.)*

Remonde explained that Ms Arroyo was out of the country when the farmers went to the Palace on Dec. 7.

Ms Arroyo was then on an official trip to Europe and Kuwait. She returned to the country on Tuesday.

No Palace official came out to meet the farmers, who were only allowed to get up to the front gates of Malacañang.

The farmers had marched for two months from Sumilao and held demonstrations in front of various national offices including the DAR, the Senate and the House of Representatives since their arrival in Metro Manila on Dec. 3.

Malacañang ...

From page A1

predecessors (Joseph Estrada, Fidel Ramos, Corazon Aquino and Ferdinand Marcos) and their respective administrations.

Former Sen. Sergio Osmeña III belongs to the opposition and was the campaign manager of the senatorial slate of the Genuine Opposition (GO) during the national elections in May. Running on an anticorruption campaign based on the findings of a survey Osmeña had commissioned, GO won seven of the 12 Senate seats at stake. The administration's Team Unity won only three seats.

Recency effect

The nationwide survey, conducted by Pulse Asia in October, also found that 45 percent of the respondents viewed the Arroyo administration as plagued by the "most intense" corruption allegations.

Bunye said the survey had "biased questions, vulnerable to what the survey profession calls 'recency effect' or (respondents being biased against the incumbent and not being able to recall misdeeds by past administrations)."

Because of this, the survey was "purely and clearly for propaganda purposes," the presidential spokesperson said in a statement.

"We appeal to public polling firms to be more discerning and not to allow questions like these to be run," Bunye said.

Release Palace survey

Contacted by an INQUIRER editor, Osmeña urged Malacañang to make public the results of its own survey.

"Tell Bunye that I am challenging the Palace to divulge the results of their regular monthly surveys and tell the Filipino people if their results are different," the former senator said in a text message.

Osmeña also dared the Palace to conduct a joint survey with the opposition on whether Filipinos believe Ms Arroyo to be a corrupt leader.

"We'd (the two sides would) choose the same NGO that would conduct the survey and I bet the results would be the same... Filipinos don't just think of her as corrupt, they believe she is corrupt," he later said in a telephone interview.

Pulse Asia executive director Ana Maria Tabunda said Osmeña paid for three questions—1. "In your opinion, which President is the most corrupt in the history of the Philippines?"

2. "In your opinion, under which administration has there been the most intense allegations of corruption?"

3. "In your opinion, which President is the least corrupt or not corrupt in the history of the Philippines?"

While "no single party" commissioned the survey, subscribers can put in their own questions, Tabunda said.

No mention of Osmeña

On Tuesday, Pulse Asia released the survey results as "additional findings" from its October 2007 "Ulat ng Bayan" national survey on corruption-related issues. There was no mention of Osmeña in the cover letter that accompanied the survey results.

"Pulse Asia undertakes Ulat ng Bayan surveys on its own without any party singularly commissioning the research effort," it said in a statement.

Tabunda stood by the results of the survey.

"Are they saying the data are incorrect because he commissioned it? We get the results as we get them, irrespective of who commissioned it. The only difference is that sponsors have the option not to release the data if the results are unfavorable to them," she said.

Accurate

Tabunda said Pulse Asia "takes pains to make sure the data are accurate."

She said that normally Pulse Asia was not allowed to release results under embargo, but that in this case, the results made their way "out."

"We had to rush things. If you notice, there was no write-up (accompanying the results), just a cover letter. We were trying to level the playing field," Tabunda said.

Embargo lifted

Osmeña explained how the survey results became public.

"Last Tuesday when I was in Bacolod to visit my 94-year-old mother in the hospital, I got a text from Pulse Asia's Ana Tabunda. She was briefing ABS-CBN on the regular periodic survey findings of Pulse. That survey had included questions on corruption. I did not know that and I commissioned a handful of rider questions on trust ratings of some leaders and the most corrupt and most honest President," Osmeña said in a text message.

"Ana asked if I could lift my embargo so that she could disclose my data to ABS... When I agreed, ABS later called me up to ask if they could announce my poll findings on their newscast and ABS inquired why I had commissioned the poll. I replied that the opposition office takes regular surveys to feel the pulse of the citizenry. We have alternated between using Pulse and SWS. Our cost for this rider was in the low six figures," he said.

A matter of perception

Coming to the defense of Ms Arroyo, the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption (VACC) questioned the criteria used in the Pulse Asia survey

In a statement, VACC executive director Janette Gonzaga said the results "were unfair and not in accordance with our own corruption criteria."

"While it is true that the Arroyo administration has been hounded with corruption controversies, her being the most corrupt President is just a matter of perception. We are calling on responsible media not to rely so much on surveys which are being paid [for] by persons or political groups motivated by political interest," she said. With a report from Jerome Aning

GMA budget vs corruption 'biggest ever'

IN MALACAÑANG, CABINET SECretary Ricardo Saludo appealed to politicians to raise the level of political discourse, and "focus attention not just on attacks against rivals, but also on actions for the nation."

"We should highlight not just crossing swords and raising voices, but also joining hands and mending fences," Saludo said at a news briefing. "And we should present not just accusation and speculation, but also solid facts and sound basis."

Big budget against corruption

Pointing out how much Ms Arroyo had done to combat corruption, Saludo said that she did not only issue 17 executive, administrative, special and proclamation orders on corruption but also spent billions of pesos to curb the problem.

A list that Saludo prepared showed that the President doubled the budget of the Office of the Ombudsman to nearly P1 billion, hired about 200 new investigators and 50 additional prosecutors, and released P2 billion more to fight corruption in 2006, "the biggest ever."

The Arroyo administration's fight against corruption resulted in 2006 in the dismissal of 57 officials who included a Bureau of Internal Revenue assistant commissioner, two internal revenue examiners and two customs examiners.

Fifteen officials were suspended, and 48 cases approved for filing with the Sandiganbayan and 131 cases for filing with the lower courts.

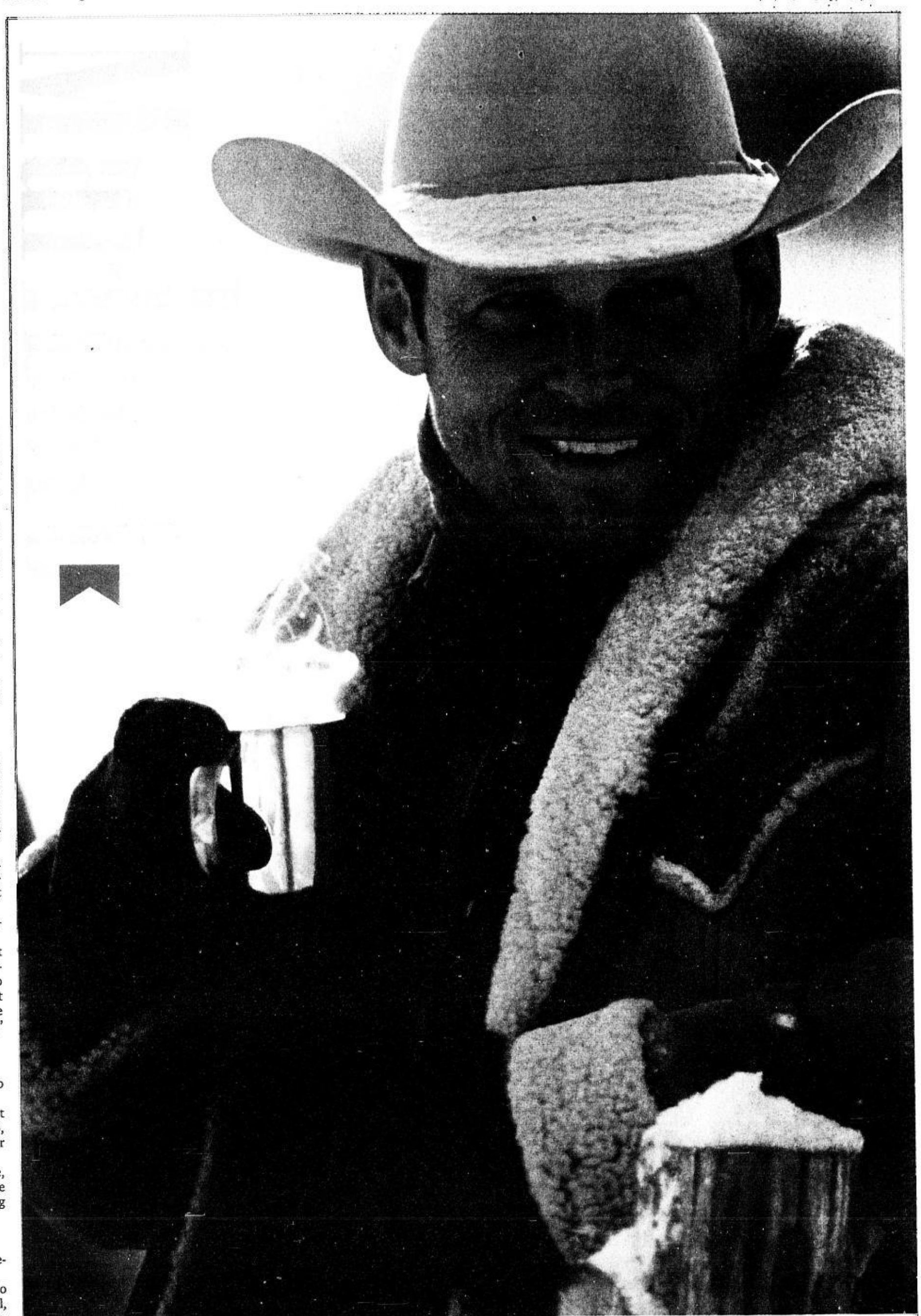
Lifestyle check

"But there are things that we are doing now that were never done before but most significant is the lifestyle check," Saludo said.

Among the orders that Ms Arroyo issued were those that created a procurement transparency board and properformance system, which Saludo said would see for the first time the inclusion of civil society groups in the procurement process.

Constancia de Guzman, head of the Presidential Anti-Corruption and Graft Commission, said the survey was unfair to the President, who she said exercised political will in the fight against corruption.

De Guzman said that it was under the Arroyo administration that a "blueprint" on how to fight corruption in the bureaucracy was produced via its medium-term development plan.



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GMA seeks return of anti-subversion law

From page A1

measure that Sorsogon Rep. Jose Solis would be filing to seek the "return of the anti-insurgency (sic) law."

"It's OK with me if it's OK with the assembly," Ms Arroyo said at the Bicol Region Local Peace and Security Assembly in Masbate City.

She must have been referring to the Anti-Subversion Law because a Palace statement said the law cited by the President punished membership in the CPP.

In the statement, Ms Arroyo said Solis earlier proposed to her "the reenactment of the antiinsurgency act," which was abolished during the Aquino administration.

Active in 69 of 81 provinces

The communist rebellion has claimed thousands of lives and left large areas of the countryside impoverished.

The rebels, waging a protracted guerrilla war since the late 1960s, are active in 69 of 81 provinces. The conflict has killed about 40,000 people and stunted economic growth in the country.

Military chief of staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon said Wednesday he expected the rebel force to be reduced to 3,000 fighters from 7,000 by 2009.

In her speech, Ms Arroyo said the government grieved for the 22 soldiers and police personnel who were killed since the start of the year in encounters with the New People's Army (NPA), the armed wing of the CPP.

"The communist rebels are making Bicol a hostage ... but we are not going to be stopped from bringing peace to the region," she said in Filipino.

She said there would be no letup in the military operations against the NPA but this "will not be an act of vengeance but a strategy to win the peace."

Ms Arroyo said the insurgents may not be able to wrest power from the government but they had nevertheless disrupted communities.

"So it is time for their disruption and violation of human rights to be put to rest so that the nation can move ahead," she said.

Reds are 'terrorists'

She noted that investors would not come to Bicol if they perceived that the communist rebels could not be stopped.

"If we are to become a First World country, we have to put a stop to their ideological nonsense and their criminal acts once and for all. It's either we get rid of them now, or we get rid of them later. Whatever happens, they must be stopped," Ms Arroyo said.

She ended her speech by calling armed communists "terrorists," who she said were "a threat to the sovereignty of the nation and must be checked once and for all."

Extrajudicial killings

The Arroyo administration has been criticized for heavy-handed counterinsurgency tactics that, according to a UN human rights expert and advocacy groups, include extrajudicial killings and disappearances of left-wing activists, farmers and other critics.

The human rights group Karapatan says more than 800 people have been killed and nearly 200 others "disappeared" since 2001.

1st uninterrupted ceasefire

In a letter he sent yesterday to Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro Jr., Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said the President had approved the "extended" suspension of offensive military operations (Somo) against the communist rebels that will start at 12 a.m. of Dec. 16 and last until midnight of Jan. 6.

It was Teodoro who recommended to Malacañang the declaration of the "extended Somo" upon the recommendation of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

It will be the first time that the government will observe an uninterrupted ceasefire during the Christmas and New Year celebrations.

"We hope the communist NPA rebels would reciprocate our unilateral action so the country could expect a peaceful Yuletide Season this year," Ermita said.

There was no immediate response from the rebels, who have refused to declare a similar truce for the past two years.

The government has routinely declared an annual unilateral Christmas truce after failing to stamp out the the NPA.

The rebels quit peace talks in 2004 over the government's refusal to lobby for their removal from US and European lists of terrorist organizations. *With reports from AFP and Reuters*

IN THE KNOW

Republic Act No. 1700 or the Anti-Subversion Law

ENACTED IN 1957 WHEN THE communist insurgency movement in the Philippines was at its peak, Republic Act No. 1700, better known as the Anti-Subversion Law, punished membership in the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) or its successor, and any organization with the same purpose.

During Marcos' martial rule, it was among the principal weapons used in fighting communist insurgency. Anybody could be arrested on mere suspicion of being a communist sympathizer.

Repealed in 1992

The law was repealed in 1992 through Republic Act No. 7636, resulting in the legalization of the CPP. Former or even current members of the CPP are not considered engaged in any criminal act so long as they do not carry arms themselves or call on others to do the same to overthrow the duly constituted government.

The repeal of RA 1700 has imposed legal constraints on the part of the military to arrest top communist leaders by reason of their affiliation with suspected subversive organizations.

In May last year, then Army Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan suggested a new law be passed outlawing the CPP and sympathetic organizations, saying their influence had grown in recent years and that repealing the old Anti-Subversion Law was a mistake.

He called for the law's restoration. *Inquirer Research*

WITH MAYON VOLCANO as backdrop, President Arroyo receives arrival honors upon landing at the Legazpi airport on Thursday to attend the Bicol Region Local Peace and Security Assembly at the Rendezvous Resort, Punta Nursery, Masbate. MALACAÑANG PHOTO

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RP boxers shake Games ...

From page A1

Thai star Somjit Jongjohor.

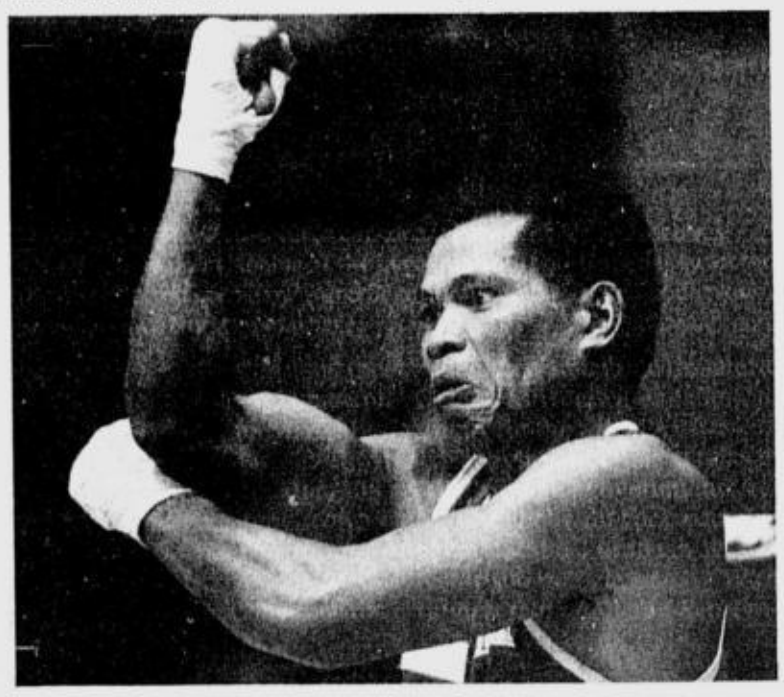
To the shock and joy of the Thai crowd, Jongjohor's right hand was raised and Castro declared the loser by retirement—referee stopped contest retired (RSC-R).

In the succeeding bout, spectators became restive after bantamweight Junel Cantancio reprised Castro's protest move, pulling off his head gear at the sound of the first bell against Thai Worapoj Petchkoom, to surrender another gold medal without receiving a punch.

The protest move by the RP squad in the 10-bout men's boxing championships featuring seven Filipinos against Thai rivals threatened to turn the event into a farce.

Thai fans, obviously treating the RP protest as a punch below the belt, threatened to misbehave as frantic International Amateur Boxing Association (AIBA) officials, headed by president Wu Ching-kuo of Chinese Taipei, held an emergency meeting in a bid to resolve the unexpected controversy.

After a tense lull that saw a couple of Filipino media men pulling off and hiding their identification cards; the resumption of action, featuring RP featherweight Orlando Tacuyan against Thailand's Sailom Adi, was announced.



FILIPINO boxer Junie Tizon makes a gesture after surrendering to Thailand's Suriya in the men's middle weight 75 kg boxing final at the SEA Games in Nakhon Ratchasima on Thursday. REUTERS

'We sent our message'

Tacuyan, together with four more RP finalists, lost their bouts against Thai foes. The remaining Filipinos either got beaten clean or, swamped early, turned their backs in mock surrender.

"We had sent our message and we also feared possible sanction from the international boxing body," RP chief of mission and Bacolod Rep. Monico Puentevella told the INQUIRER.

He said they had to resort to the two-bout walkout to protest what he called grossly unfair officiating in the women's boxing championships on Wednesday, where the Filipinos won only one of the six gold medals contested against Thailand.

With POC imprimatur

Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines president Manny Lopez said the walkout, in the form of two outright surrenders, had the approval of the RP boxers and the entire coaching staff.

It also had the imprimatur of the Philippine Olympic Committee.

"Lopez is our officer. He, as an NSA head, is part of the Olympic body. We respected and supported his move," Puentevella explained.

Lopez explained that he was particularly maddened by what he called shabby and rude treatment Filipino women fighters received from the judges during their championship bouts, where the Filipinas salvaged a lone gold against six Thai rivals.

'Not to our women'

"If the cheating had been done against our male boxers, we would not have protested at all, but not to our women fighters. *Binastos talaga nila* (They really insulted them)," Lopez said.

Puentevella said the RP women's team could have easily picked a second gold on Wednesday if there had been fairer scoring in the final bout featuring defending lightweight champion Mitchel Martinez.

Martinez had a strong start but faded rapidly and was outpointed, 11-21, by Thailand's Sumittra Ngoksungnoen.

With its sweep of 10 men's championships and six final wins in the women's division, Thailand amassed 16 gold medals in boxing, a Southeast Asian Games record.

Discrepancies in scoring

The RP team sent a relatively weaker boxing squad, mainly in the men's division, where only Class B fighters were fielded.

The Filipinos practically had no chance of retaining the boxing championship they won in Bacolod City two years ago.

There, indeed, had been several discrepancies in scoring in the women's championship on Wednesday but a review of the bouts, as done by several media men inside the NBN tent at the International Broadcast Center here, showed that Thailand, on the whole, managed to dominate women's action because it fielded a younger, determined and superior team.

But the RP team, despite a so-so showing in boxing, scored a historic blow with the protest walkout that shook the championships.

Naia workers in hot water over Christmas queue

THEY ARE NO GRINCHES, BUT airport officials are bent on making their employees learn that accepting Christmas gifts is a no-no.

Manila International Airport Authority (Miaa) General Manager Alfonso Cusi yesterday directed airport agency heads to take administrative action against personnel who were caught on video lining up for cash gifts handed out by Maguindanao Gov. Datu Andal Ampatuan Sr. and his son, Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao Gov. Datu Zaldy Uy Ampatuan, on Dec. 7 at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

Security risk

Cusi issued a memorandum to the Philippine National Police-Aviation Security Group and Miaa assistant general managers identifying police officers, utility attendants and other airport workers who left their posts to queue for the money.

"We sent a memo to the PNP-ASG to say that a review of the footage showed airport workers, including ASG personnel, were seen on queue while [the Ampatuans] were giving away cash. In so doing, they abandoned their posts, creating a security risk. Then we asked for appropriate action," Cusi said.

He said a separate memo was sent to Miaa assistant general managers to "direct them to take utmost administrative action" against those who lined up for the Ampatuans' gifts which ranged from P500 to P1,000.

"This is a regular memorandum reminder that if a situation like this happens, we should prevent it so that airport operations would not break down," Cusi said.

The Ampatuans sparked a frenzy among airport workers at Naia Terminal 1 when their staff announced they were handing out cash in the VIP room.

The elder Ampatuan was seeing off his son and other relatives who were going to Saudi Arabia.

"It is a learning situation for Miaa on how to handle the matter in the future. That's what we are emphasizing to the respective departments," Cusi said.

The PNP-ASG, meanwhile, has launched its own investigation to determine if any of its men assigned at a security checkpoint near the VIP room were among those who received cash. *Tarra Quismundo*

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1. The disposition and sale of the property shall be on an "AS-IS-WHERE-IS" basis;
2. For outright sale proposals, terms of payment may be in cash or installment;
3. Offers for joint venture should indicate the proposed terms, sharing scheme, duration of the project and schedule of projected sales.

HGC reserves the right to require additional information as it deems necessary to better understand and evaluate the offer(s).

Interested parties are encouraged to inspect the property before tendering their offers.

Details pertaining to the property as well as the guidelines for the negotiation can be obtained from the HGC's Asset Management and Disposition Group at the Jade Building (4th Floor), 335 Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City.

For inquiries, please call the Asset Management Department at telephone nos. 897-32-86 & 897-32-90, or visit the HGC office at #335 Jade Building, Sen. Gil J. Puyat Avenue, Makati City.

THE CORPORATION RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL OFFERS, TO WAIVE ANY DEFECTS OR TO ACCEPT SUCH OFFER AS MAY BE CONSIDERED MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE CORPORATION.

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Doomed OFWs have first crack at legal aid, says DFA

THE DEPARTMENT of Foreign Affairs will give financial assistance priority to Overseas Filipino Workers who are in the death row abroad.

Foreign Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs Esteban Conejos made this clarification yesterday as he appealed for understanding from the 27 Filipino nurses who are facing criminal charges in New York for alleged abandonment and endangerment of patients.

The Filipino nurses had walked out of their work to protest poor working conditions.

Conejos said the DFA could only provide limited financial support for the nurses because of lack of money.

Conejos said the department had to give priority to cases of Filipinos facing the death penalty or who are already on death row.

"As early as four months ago the department has already authorized the extension of legal assistance to them. But remember the money that we have to give them is not much because we have a limited legal assistance fund and we have to prioritize also our money," Conejos said.

Cynthia Balana

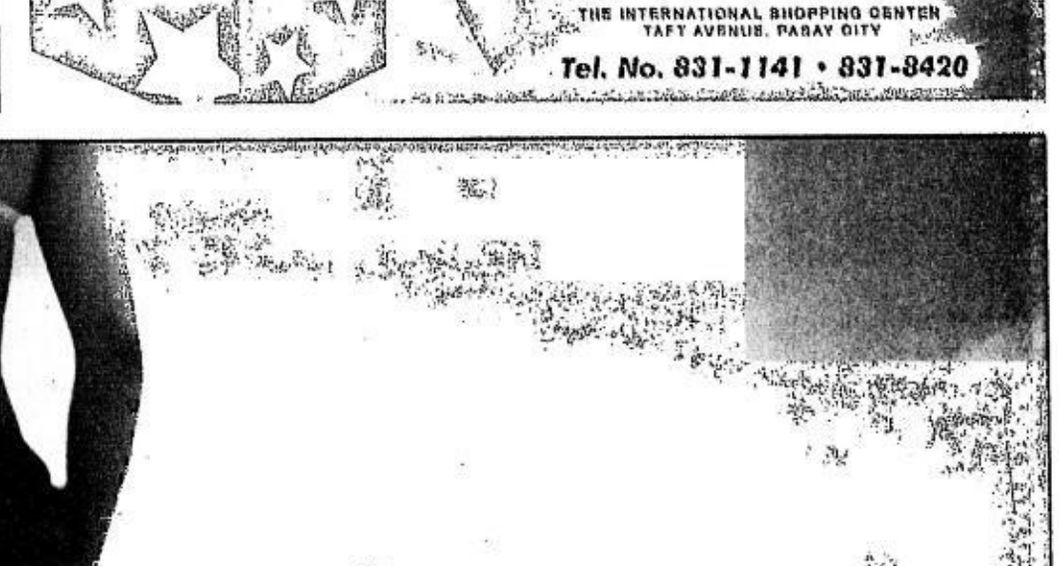
PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo receives Saif Al-Islam Al-Gadhafi during yesterday's courtesy call in Malacañang. EDWIN BACASMAS

Miriam chides Teves for sale of PNOC-EDC

SEN. MIRIAM DEFENSOR-SANTIAGO scored government officials led by Finance Secretary Margarito Teves for selling Philippine National Oil Co. Energy Development Corp. (PNOC-EDC) for a song and sacrificing the country's future for short-term and personal gratification.

During the first hearing of the Joint Congressional Power Commission (JCPC) on the PNOC-EDC, Santiago called Teves "unfit" as a a finance secretary for his failure to justify the sale of the government's 60 percent stake in the geothermal producer at a fraction of its annual earnings.

"If it (EDC) contributed more than that (P71 billion annual revenues versus the P58 billion sale price) to the national treasury, then why sell it? Because then it would be able to make more money than it is being sold for in the very near future. They (the government panel) cannot give us a ballpark figure. These are huge amounts of money and we are entitled to an explanation why we are selling a profitable government enterprise," said Santiago who lost her patience when Teves and other officials failed to answer her basic questions. *Gil C. Cabacungan*



Gadhafi son calls on GMA, receives Congress award

LIBYAN LEADER MOAMMAR Gadhafi's eldest son called on President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday during a state visit to promote peace in the rebellion-prone Muslim region in Mindanao, officials said.

Ms Arroyo received Saif Al-Islam Al-Gadhafi in Malacanang and expressed her thanks to Tripoli's continued support to the peace process in the Mindanao, a Malacañang statement said.

The call at the Palace came after Speaker Jose de Venecia awarded the younger Gadhafi the Congressional Medal of Achievement in recognition of "the various significant roles he has played, including humanitarian activities and support of the peace process in Mindanao and Southern Philippines."

"You are one of the outstanding young leaders recognized in the international community," De Venecia said as he bestowed the award on Gadhafi in ceremonies witnessed by guests that included members of the House of Representatives and the diplomatic corps.

A special guest at Wednesday night's occasion was Dr. Martin Luther King III, who runs the Centre for Non-Violent Social Change founded by his martyred father, American civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Father and son

The same award was bestowed in 2003 by De Venecia on the elder Gadhafi, who is currently in France.

"Libya will continue helping us in the peace and development efforts, especially in southern Philippines," Ms Arroyo's peace adviser Jesus Dureza told reporters after the Malacañang meeting, which was also attended by key presidential advisers.

"It is a continuation of what has been started in 1976," Dureza said, referring to a Libyan-brokered ceasefire that ended a full-blown separatist war by the large Muslim minority in Mindanao.

One separatist faction, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), later signed a peace treaty with the government in 1996 while a second faction, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), is observing a ceasefire and is expected to sign a similar treaty as early as next year after protracted negotiations.

Gadhafi was expected to meet with representatives of both the MNLF and the MILF later yesterday.

Libyan diplomats said he would ask the MILF to reunite with the MNLF from which it split in 1978.

Welcome help

MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu welcomed Libya's help in trying to end conflict in Mindanao.

"It is a welcome development that Libya wants to help. Anything that would hasten and lead to the early peaceful resolution of the conflict in Mindanao is always welcome," Kabalu told AFP.

However, he said, the MILF leadership "still has to see the substance" of Libya's offer.

Libya was key in brokering the peace deal with the MNLF, which has opted for limited self-rule, and has poured money into development in Muslim Mindanao.

In the congressional citation read by Rep. Antonio Cuenco and Rep. Lorna Silverio, the Award recognized the younger Gadhafi for the protracted negotiations he conducted on behalf of Libya, resulting in the "unprecedented settlement of the 1988 Lockerbie incident in 2003" and in the lifting of economic and political sanctions against Libya imposed by the United Nations.

Hostage negotiator

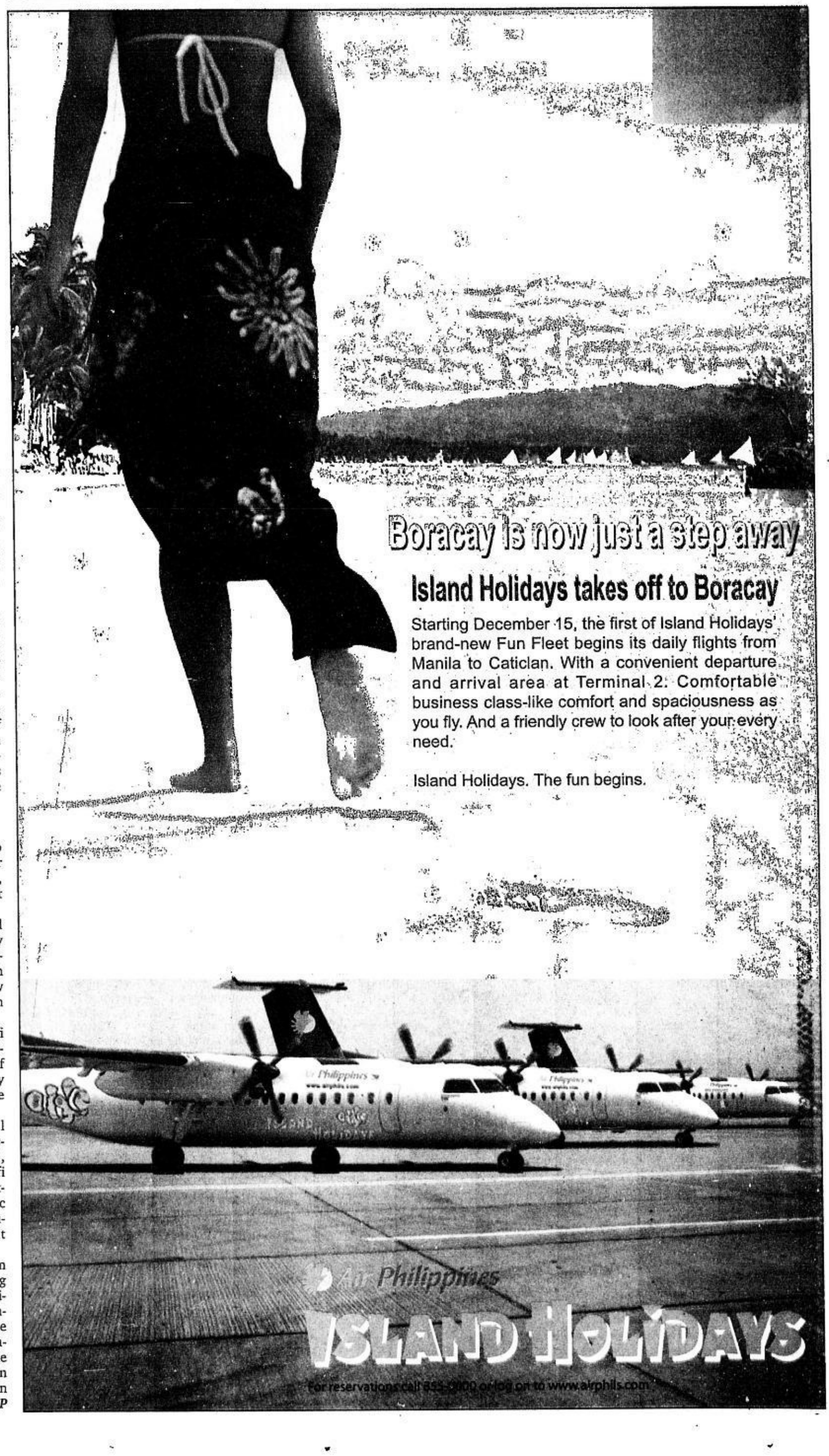
The award said Gadhafi also helped to scuttle Libya's nuclear weapons program in 2003, making the announcement that was acclaimed by the world.

The award also recognized him for standing courageously against extremism and excessive Islamic fundamentalism "that were beginning to blow across the deserts of Northern Africa."

The award said the Gadhafi Foundation, of which he is president, negotiated the release of Western hostages captured by the Abu Sayyaf group in the South in 2000.

The Gadhafi International Foundation for Charitable Associations (GIFCA), bankrolled by the Gadhafi family, has been implementing various socio-economic programs in Muslim communities in Mindanao for about a decade now.

Libyan Ambassador Salem Adam translated for the young Gadhafi, who expressed gratitude to the House of Representatives and De Venecia for the award that praised the Foundation's work in "nurturing the historical friendship between the Filipinos and the Libyan people." *AFP*



PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2007

ISSN 0116-2642

INQUIRER

Vol. 23 No. 6

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OPINION

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THE PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, INC. has its business and editorial offices at
•Chino Roces Ave corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City
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•Our telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments
•Editorial Fax 897-4793 / 897-4794 •Advertising 897-4807
•Circulation 523-5570
•Subscription Hotline 896-6000

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The mostest

THE OCTOBER 2007 SURVEY CONDUCTED BY Pulse Asia belongs to a long-running series of regular polls called "Ulat ng Bayan." It contains riders—additional questions, from survey subscribers—that test public opinion on certain issues or even products and services. One such rider has led to the most controversial survey result in recent memory: the finding that voting-age Filipinos find President Macapagal-Arroyo the "most corrupt" president in history.

EDITORIAL

Perhaps the best way to make sense of the controversy is to consider, and refute, the different statements—the different defenses, so to speak—adopted by Malacañang.

The small-sample defense. The best thing that can be said about this line of defense is that it is mentally dishonest. "We ... vehemently challenge the survey results which could have been influenced by a number of distorting factors such as the sample (1,200 respondents out of 84 million Filipinos)," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye concluded in one statement. "What is most important," Cabinet Secretary Ricardo Saludo said in a statement written in Filipino, "is the President's unceasing service to the millions of Filipinos, not her rating in surveys of 1,500 people."

The implication is that the universe of survey respondents is too small as to be representative. This comes as news to us, because Malacañang has in fact depended on similar surveys, conducted by the same polling organizations, when they meet its objectives. The President's election victory over main rival Fernando Poe Jr. was predicted by the surveys, and Arroyo officials used that very trend in the last several weeks of the 2004 campaign to defend Malacañang, in 2005, against accusations of election fraud raised by the "Hello, Garci" tapes. Those surveys had more or less the same sample size, but did we hear any Malacañang official whining about its unrepresentativeness then?

The perception vs. reality defense. We believe, as any other rational being would, that there is indeed a difference between perception and reality. We do not believe, however, that there is no necessary connection between perception and reality. The best thing that can be said about Presidential Management Staff chief Cerge Remonde, when he says that because the survey dealt only with perceptions, the results are "far from reality," is that he is whistling in the dark.

The same October survey also found that only a quarter of voting-age Filipinos were willing to take to the streets to force the resignation of a president linked to corruption. This is not exactly the constituency for another People Power uprising, and therefore good news for Ms Arroyo—but by Malacañang's own reckoning this finding is mere perception, not reality-in-the-making. We have not heard any Malacañang official, however, question the validity of this particular finding.

The commission-bias defense. The findings about the "most corrupt president" are biased, Malacañang says, because that part of the October "Ulat ng Bayan" was commissioned by an opposition leader. "From what we know," said Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, "certain individuals and groups of individuals are behind the survey." If indeed reputable polling organizations like Pulse Asia can be manipulated into producing pre-determined survey results, why do they enjoy such good reputations? Why, for that matter, does the administration and its allies commission them to do polling work?

The track record of these polling organizations explains their reputation. And the careful use of scientific surveys explains that track record. Indeed, the wording in the Pulse Asia press statement is precise: "The survey's sampling design and questionnaire are the full responsibility of Pulse Asia's pool of academic experts and no religious, political, economic or any other form of partisanship has been allowed to influence the survey design, the findings generated by the actual surveys or the subsequent analyses of survey findings."

The recency-effect defense. Bunye, in another statement, criticized the survey design, saying it was "vulnerable to what in the survey profession calls 'recency effect.'" But that suggests that the dictator Ferdinand Marcos would fare much better than he did, and Joseph Estrada, who was very much in the news at the time of the survey, would fare much worse. But they didn't. Doesn't that already tell us something?

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Ex-BIR chief speaks out on Pall Mall case

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

SEN. MIRIAM DEFENSOR-SANTIAGO IS FOAming at the mouth demanding to know who paid Pulse Asia for the survey that found her friend, President Macapagal-Arroyo "the most corrupt President" of the Philippines. She is implying that Pulse Asia was paid by oppositionists to get the desired results in the survey. But Pulse Asia already announced that it undertakes "Ulat ng Bayan" surveys on its own, without any party singularly commissioning them. Besides, Filipinos don't need a survey; they already know—with the possible exception of Senator Santiago—that GMA is the most corrupt President we ever had. She should be in the Guinness Book of World Records.

* * *

There is something very strange in the Department of Finance. Its primary responsibility is to collect revenues for the government, which is always short of funds, what with the distribution of half-million-peso bribes in the presidential palace itself and the President traveling all over the world with oversized retinues at the people's expense. But instead of collecting taxes, the DOF is giving away taxes that are already collectible.

Two notorious cases are already stinking: (1) the Pall Mall case where the DOF lowered the excise tax on that foreign-brand cigarette, causing the government to lose almost P100 million in tax revenues every year; and (2) the large-scale smuggling of generator sets in Subic. The Bureau of Customs found the shipments 98 percent undervalued and seized the cargo, but the DOF gave the importer a tax-free importation permit, causing the government to lose P373 million more. (More on this in another column.)

On the Pall Mall issue, former Revenue Commissioner Jose Mario Buñag explained at the Kapihan sa Manila how it came about. Pall Mall, he said, is an imported cigarette sold at duty-free shops. The excise tax for every pack of Pall Mall was P26.75. British American Tobacco, owner of the Pall Mall brand, later gave the local La Suerte Cigarette Factory a license to produce the brand here. The law says an imported brand, even when produced locally, retains the same excise tax. That's what then BIR Commissioner Buñag declared on the Pall Mall case.

Shortly after, Finance Secretary Margarito Teves had Buñag fired, allegedly because he didn't meet his collection target, immediately after which the DOF reversed the BIR and lowered the excise tax on Pall Mall to P6.75 per pack.

And now that Buñag is no longer the BIR chief, the bureau is collecting even less. Buñag actually collected more revenues than in the previous year, but the DOF purposely set a very high collection target for him this year (so that there will be an excuse to fire him?).

* * *

This Tuesday, Dec. 18, a seven-month-old mining concern, Oriental Peninsula Resources Group Inc., will debut in the stock market. Its initial public offering (IPO) is 300 million common shares with an offer price of P1.98 to P2.98 per share. Oriental hopes to raise P804 million from the public, purportedly to finance the operation of nickel mines in Palawan.

Before you jump in, better read the fine print on Oriental Peninsula and understand it. For one, it has no direct experience in nickel mining. Its primary asset is a one-and-half-year-old firm called Citinickel Mines and Development Corp., which has staked a claim on the nickel-rich Palawan mines.

The problem is that Citinickel may never get to operate the Palawan mines. According to the 11th Division of the Court of Appeals (CA), it is Platinum Group Metals Corp. (PGMC) that has the exclusive right to do so because of an operating agreement that came into force on July 18, 2003. This agreement is good for 25 years, covering the entire 2,176 hectares of nickel-rich mine sites in the towns of Narra and Sofronio Española.

This had prompted PGMC to inform the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) of litigation that Oriental Peninsula failed to disclose to the public, specifically the CA ruling on the claim of its subsidiary on the Palawan mines, on which both companies have pegged their profitability. PGMC noted that a review of Oriental Peninsula's disclosures was crucial to protect the investing public, considering that Oriental based its offer price mainly on the valuation of the mineral resource estimate.

Oriental retorts that PGMC holds just a small portion of the Palawan mine site, and that PGMC's small-scale mining permit (SSMP) is due to expire next year.

Oriental is evading the issue. For clarity, here's a direct quote from Page 4 of the Nov. 20, 2007 CA decision:

"On July 18, 2003, an operating agreement was entered into by and between Olympic and private respondent Platinum for the exclusive right to control, possess, manage/operate and conduct mining operations and to market or dispose of mining products on the Toronto Nickel Mine in the Municipality of Narra with an area of 768 hectares and the Pulot Nickel Mine in the Municipality of Española covering an area of 1,408 hectares, for a period of 25 years in consideration of a royalty fee of 2.5 percent of gross revenues."

The CA set aside a resolution of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources Panel of Arbitrators (POA), which is the basis for Citinickel's claim on the Palawan mines, because it violated the cease-and-desist order of the Palawan court.

The CA also penalized Citinickel by ordering it to pay triple the costs for forum-shopping. In its short life span, Citinickel has filed 12 cases in its bid to take over the Palawan mines. Not a single case has prospered in the courts.

The CA also pointed out that any amendment or alteration which substantially affects a final and executory judgment is null and void for lack of jurisdiction.

The banality of Asean evils

PASSION FOR REASON

Raul C. Pangalangan

"BANAL" IS ONE WORD THAT EXISTS IN both English and Filipino—and means the exact opposite of what it means in the other. The Pinoy *"banal"* means sacred and holy; thus "Banal na Kasulatan" stands for the Holy Book. In contrast, the English "banal" refers to the commonplace and mundane, which was the sense in which Hannah Arendt, writing about the trial of the Nazi, Adolf Eichmann, used the word in her title, "Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil."

Arendt said that people commit unspeakable evils not because they have become fanatics or sociopaths. Rather, she said, evils are done by ordinary people who simply have accepted the world as it is, and commit despicable acts that, in such a monstrous world, feel like the most humdrum and commonplace.

The TV networks reported on some celebrations of Human Rights Day earlier this week, and then showed clips of Burmese military firing into crowds of unarmed civilian protesters, or clobbering saffron-clad Buddhist monks. By the ruling junta's own count, 15 civilians died in the encounters, and unofficial figures estimate many more. In a few seconds, I saw human rights swing from the sacred to the prosaic.

The governments of Southeast Asia and their regional organization, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, stood idly by as Burma's military dictators went on a rampage. This was the same Asean which, just several weeks back, spoke of formalizing a human rights mechanism, then backtracked and said it would just adopt by consensus a mere nonbinding declaration, and even that it diluted even more. And when the first test came around in Rangoon, Asean blinked.

If Asean can't do anything with Burma, it can't do little else for anyone. Burma has no oil fields (except a natural gas deposit). It controls no strategic sea lanes. It has no Kremlin to run to for subsidized grain or arms. It hosts no US military bases. It has no charismatic Fidel Castro to keep things from unraveling. In short, what keeps Asean from punishing Burma? It is the old boys' mantra of non-intervention: I ignore your sins and you ignore mine.

Indeed, Asean cancelled the UN representative's scheduled briefing on the Burmese situation for Asean heads of state. "Myanmar feels that they deal with the UN and it is their own domestic matter. This evening, Myanmar objected and we base our decisions on consensus." In short, Burma said: How we bash the heads of our own citizens is our own business, not any one else's.

Filipinos must recognize that same logic from the martial law years, when Marcos resisted human rights pressure from US President Jimmy Carter and actually convinced some Filipinos that in doing so, he was a nationalist standing up to a foreign power. (Remember, too, that Ninoy and Cory Aquino were able to leave for their Boston exile due to Carter's prodding.)

As if Asean wasn't enough of a stupid joke, came the news that King Juan Carlos I of Spain gave President Macapagal-Arroyo the University of Alcala de Henares Gold Medal for human rights. President Arroyo receiving a Spanish award for human rights is like former President Joseph Estrada receiving a Papal Citation for monogamy.

While the citation was careful to focus on Arroyo's abolition of the death penalty, it ignored the UN special rapporteur's findings on extrajudicial killings of Left-wing activists in the Philippines. Malacañang's operatives in Madrid really pulled a fast one on that award.

Philip Alston, the respected professor from New York University (and formerly from the European University in Florence), found in the Philippine military "a state of almost total denial" and in the rest of the Philippine government "a passivity, bordering on an abdication of responsibility."

Alston concluded: "Many of the accountability mechanisms [and constitutional] checks on governmental abuses have been rendered ineffectual .... On paper, they remain strong. In practice, they are of all too little use, and often this is the result of official design...."

I have been lecturing in Italy the past days, and this morning I will lecture in Siena, a medieval town in the heart of Tuscany. (I'm afraid I won't get to see much, except the insides of the lecture halls. My wife will just take lots of photos.) In Europe, human rights is a sophisticated debate about the overlap between rights guaranteed by the European Union and whether these trump national courts and laws. For them, human rights threats come not from the state alone but also from private groups—unions, village councils, fellow citizens—and present dilemmas, to borrow from Harvard law professor and former US Solicitor General Paul Freund, "not [as] a clash between right and wrong ... but between right and right."

Their problems seem like such a luxury to this hapless Pinoy. I thought that after Edsa I, we had moved beyond the most rudimentary issues of torture and "salvaging," and we could turn to the problem of poverty and the dehumanizing gap between rich and poor. Today, 21 years after the end of martial rule, we are really "Back to the Future," a movie which, come to think of it, came out in 1985. As a professor, I would prefer to deal with more intellectually challenging issues, but instead I am rooted in my reality, which worships not Oliver Wendell Holmes of the US Supreme Court but Sherlock Holmes of Scotland Yard. Cite the wrong Holmes and you end up using a lesser part of your brain.

I am old enough to remember when "Human Rights" was not a proper thing to study in law schools. It began as heresy, and then became gospel, and now is debased into ritual. And for the Arroyo regime, the timing couldn't have been more perfect.

* * *

Comments to passionforreason@gmail.com

Rated most corrupt

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

THE ARROYO ADMINISTRATION ATTACKED THE credibility of the Pulse Asia survey finding President Macapagal-Arroyo "the most corrupt" among five Filipino presidents during the past 21 years, surpassing the dictator Ferdinand Marcos, on the grounds that the survey was commissioned by former Sen. Sergio Osmeña III, the opposition's campaign manager in the May 2007 election and was based on perception and not "on facts."

The attack bounced off after Osmeña admitted that he had commissioned the survey and Pulse Asia executive director Ana Maria Tabunda dismissed it as irrelevant. "The results are independent, regardless of who commissioned it," she said.

The irrelevance was compounded by the fact that the President's ally, Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, has said she is filing a resolution in the Senate to investigate not only Pulse Asia but also all other polling organizations whose surveys have been published by media.

These reactions tend to counter the fallout by trying to kill the messenger of bad news and fabricating a new set of irrelevance.

Santiago is a past master of this trick. This line of attack is not new to opinion polls, especially during the election season, in which parties and candidates found to be losing routinely attack the credibility of results, the motivation of the polling organizations and even their integrity, with insinuations that surveys are rigged with questions designed and skewed to produce the results desired by the sponsors of the survey.

The Pulse Asia survey, conducted on Oct. 20-31, produced results that were so controversial and damning to President Arroyo who came out worse than two presidents who had, prior to the survey, been the benchmark of rapacity in the country's history since 1946: Ferdinand Marcos and Joseph Estrada.

There are valid issues that can be raised about the survey. The first is the time context of the comparison of records of the five presidents. The second, which is less important than the first, is the timing of the survey. Osmeña has said that he wanted to test political awareness of the public in relation to the 2010 election, which is still far off, making me conclude that the survey is a wasted effort at this stage in terms of immediate political impact.

Regarding the first issue, what seems to be galling to Ms Arroyo and hard for her to accept is that she has been rated the most corrupt in three categories on the basis of perception in comparison with Marcos and Estrada, who have gone down in the history of corruption with documented evidence of the magnitude of their loot or plunder of the public wealth.

The Marcos loot has been quantified in the ill-gotten wealth cases filed by the Presidential Commission on Good Government against his heirs to recover such loot and its forfeiture in favor of the government. The Estrada loot has been identified and quantified in the recent Sandiganbayan decision on the plunder case against him. The Marcos hidden wealth case and the Estrada plunder provide a concrete basis for comparison. This is what makes the Public Pulse survey vulnerable to claims by President Arroyo's allies that the comparison is unfair and based on uneven criteria. They say that judgments on her record are based on perception and not on facts.

The survey asked three questions:

1. In your opinion, under which administration has there been the most intense allegations of corruption? The results nationwide: Arroyo administration, 45 percent; Marcos, 31 percent; Estrada, 14 percent; Fidel Ramos, 7 percent; Corazon Aquino, 1 percent.

2. In your opinion, which president is the most corrupt in Philippine history? Results nationwide: Arroyo, 42 percent; Marcos, 35 percent; Estrada, 16 percent; Ramos, 5 percent; Aquino, 1 percent.

3. In your opinion, which president is the least corrupt or not corrupt in the history of the Philippines? The results: Aquino, 66 percent; Estrada, 11 percent; Marcos, 9 percent; Ramos, 6 percent; Arroyo, 5 percent.

Pulse Asia pointed out that the survey was conducted against the background of contemporary events, which by implication might have influenced public opinion in making conclusions. The implication seems to be that fresh recall of events helped shape the harsh judgment against Ms Arroyo. According to the survey, the events that dominated the news headlines at the time of the survey include the cash handout to congressmen and governors in Malacañang, the ZTE broadband contract scandal, the grant of the absolute pardon to Estrada, the explosion at the Glorietta shopping mall, renewed calls for the resignation of the President, the revival of the moves to impeach the President. In this catalogue, only two were directly related to corruption: the ZTE scandal and the cash handouts at the Palace. Thus, the category of corruption was ill-defined in the issues impinging on the public mind when the questions were asked.

Malacañang officials held the media's critical coverage of the administration to be responsible for the survey results, saying the survey "shows what happens when media publish accusations and insinuations against the government without bothering to verify or even to ask for the basis of the charges." The administration should ask itself this uncomfortable question: Given the evidence presented in the Marcos and Estrada cases, why is the public so disposed to condemn President Arroyo on the basis of perception without the benefit of verified evidence? What's so special about Ms Arroyo that she suffers in comparison with Marcos and Estrada?

Why 'Mrs. X' died

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

BANGKOK—THE WORKSHOP I AM ATTENDING in this city opened with the story of "Mrs. X," or rather, the story of "Why Did Mrs. X Die?" The video tells the story of "maternal mortality through one woman's death."

The narrator says that on the surface, the reasons for the death of Mrs. X, whose real identity and nationality have been kept secret to protect her and her family's privacy, are fairly clear. She died while giving birth, the death certificate stating the cause of death as "antepartum hemorrhage" or bleeding that started before delivery.

But a deeper investigation into Mrs. X's death revealed that she was at risk long before her delivery. Her death, says the narrator, highlights the "unmet needs for maternal care at the village level." It had taken four hours since she started bleeding for Mrs. X to reach a hospital. And when she got there, only 500 cc of blood was available for transfusion.

Further investigation revealed the extent of Mrs. X's vulnerability. Weeks before delivery, she had suffered "two minor episodes of bleeding," which is a "very dangerous signal in late pregnancy." And yet, because the bleeding episodes ceased and she kept the baby, "no action was taken and (the risk) was not revealed to Mrs. X." The bleeding could also be traced to the fact that Mrs. X was not very healthy to begin with, suffering from "chronic and severe anemia" even before this last, fatal pregnancy.

Her poor health could be attributed to other factors: Mrs. X was 39 years old and had delivered five children, and "really didn't want to have another child." But she still got pregnant even if she was already at an age when any pregnancy could be described as "high risk."

Investigators discovered that Mrs. X "never had access to family planning information, education or services and had never used family planning." Thus, says the narrator, Mrs. X also died "because she was poor, because of her socio-economic status, because of her poverty, ignorance, and of social and gender injustice."

* * *

MANY times along what the narrator calls "the maternity death road," Mrs. X could have taken other roads or paths that could have saved her life. But these escape routes—among them, the opportunity to plan her family, avoid unwanted pregnancies or space her pregnancies; access to full quality information and services before and during her pregnancy; access to quality health services and trained birth attendants—were all closed to her. Even then, she had one last way out: access to quality emergency obstetric care when she developed complications. But because she was poor to begin with, because she was in poor health, and because she lived in an inaccessible area, even this last path was closed to her and she continued inevitably down the "maternity death road."

"How can we be silent bystanders as millions of women die?" asked Jagdish Upadhyay, chief of the Commodity Management Bureau of the UN Population Fund, at the workshop's opening. Noting that the video was made in 1988, nearly 20 years ago, and that by most estimates every year 500,000 women around the world die due to causes related to pregnancy and childbirth, he asked us to imagine how many "Mrs. X's" had died since the video was released.

* * *

THE WORKSHOP I am attending has a mouthful for a title: "Advocacy in Strengthening National Capacity for Achieving Reproductive Health Commodity Security."

In sum, it's a workshop bringing together delegations from different countries in the region—China, Mongolia, Laos, Cambodia, Burma (Myanmar), Vietnam, Indonesia, Timor Leste and the Philippines—with each delegation composed of one representative each from the local UNFPA office, an NGO, the executive branch, the legislature and the media discussing the Reproductive Health Commodity Security (RHCS) situation in their countries and working out advocacy plans to promote and ensure RHCS in the region.

Reproductive health commodities, speakers made clear at the workshop's opening, aren't just family planning supplies, but all medicines, drugs and devices necessary to ensure the survival of women before and during pregnancy and delivery. These include blood units, antibiotics (in case of sepsis or infection), vitamins, drugs to halt bleeding, and even forms of transport to rush women to hospitals in emergencies.

"Reproductive health commodity security" is achieved, we were told, "when all individuals can obtain and use affordable, quality reproductive health commodities of their choice whenever and wherever they need these."

* * *

"RHCS" is a particular issue of concern for countries undergoing or facing donor phase-outs. Since 1994, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) has begun a systematic reduction of contraceptive donations, concerned, among other reasons, about the "culture of dependence" the donations had spawned among governments.

The Philippines joins other countries represented in this workshop—Cambodia, Indonesia and Vietnam—where phase-outs are taking place. By next year, the final batch of commodities from USAID to the Philippines will be delivered, and many local governments, to whom responsibility for reproductive health programs has been turned over, face shortfalls in supplies, if not "stock-outs," the total absence of commodities that people need or want.

In some cases, "stock-outs" are the result of deliberate neglect; in others, of failures in logistics or planning. This is why this workshop is about advocacy, shaping public opinion to create awareness about the importance of RHCS and to influence legislators and officials to adequately finance the purchase of supplies and make people down the line accountable for their performance. Otherwise, we just might see the number of "Mrs. X's" growing even larger.

Entering the past

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

FILIPINOS WHO VISIT MADRID PAY THEIR respects to culture by visiting the following museums: Prado Museum (magnificent paintings from the medieval period to the 19th century, masters like Bosch, Murillo, Velazquez, and Goya being the crowd drawers); Centro de Arte Reina Sofia (modern, that is 20th century, and contemporary art, the main attraction being Piacasso's iconic "Guernica"); and, most enjoyed by everyone young and old, Museo de Jamon (that displays and serves all the Spanish hams, sausages, cheeses and other delicacies imaginable).

When the city and museum tours are finished, Filipinos flock to the other Madrid landmarks, the temples of commerce being El Corte Ingles (which is a cross between our own Rustan's and SM) and now Zara (both the main store and the outlets that sell past fashion at bargain prices). With all of the other attractions to see and do in Madrid, most Filipinos miss paying their respects at the Rizal Monument on Avenida de las Islas Filipinas. Why should you go to Madrid to see a copy of the monument in Luneta? Why should you even bother to retrace the steps of the national hero in Madrid, many of which are identified by commemorative markers?

I will leave the places associated with Rizal for another column because there are smaller, overlooked museums that contain Philippine material, like Museo Naval and Museo del Ejercito. It is unfortunate that Museo del Ejercito has moved from its old location, the center of many major museums, to a spot outside Madrid, because its old building has a grand staircase lined with *lantakas* or cannons from Mindanao, spoils of war that are both a testament to bravery and workmanship. The detail of these cannons, some of which date back to the 17th century, reveals a craftsmanship we have not seen since. It would be useful if someone would produce a lavishly illustrated study of Philippine weapons. To date, all we have are those kitschy souvenir items called "Weapons of Moro Land" in the shape of a shield and containing miniatures of various bladed weapons used in the Mindanao wars.

Literally a spit away from the Atocha Train station is Museo Antropologico. The Atocha station is famous for its indoor tropical garden, a mini-forest that gives visitors and travelers a taste of the tropics even in the middle of winter. Atocha is also famous as the site of a horrendous terrorist attack, and when you cross the street from the station to the museum, you will see the tracks where mangled trains and dead bodies once lay. Inside Museo Antropologico, you enter the past. You see on the ground floor an entire exhibition hall dedicated to the Philippines. Suspended from the ceiling in this wonderful space are two large bancas that form part of a collection that was built from objects exhibited in the Exposicion de Filipinas in 1887.

There is much more in storage, but what are out for public view are worth seeing. Early paintings by Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo and other less-known 19th-century Filipino painters are there, with the noticeable absence of works by Juan Luna. There are sculptures showing what people in the colony looked like and what they wore. There are ritual objects, *santos* that represent the lowland Christian Filipinos and the *bululs* from the Cordilleras. Then, of course, there are weapons, fishing implements, agricultural tools, etc. that provide ethnographic insight into the past.

Museo Antropologico is like a time capsule. The objects were brought to Madrid with live specimens from various parts of the archipelago in their native costumes. "Typical" dwellings were built to house them, and I wouldn't be surprised if the bancas now on display were also used in Parque del Retiro for added effect. Over a century later, these same objects can be studied again to see how different or how similar we are as a people.

Aside from the materials in Madrid, we have been told that the materials Jose Rizal sent from Dapitan to Germany in the 1890s have survived the war and may be available for study today. Rizal sent many things to scholars abroad—natural specimens—which explains why there is a winged lizard (*Draco rizali*) and a bug (*Apogonia rizali*) whose scientific names or classifications carry the hero's surname. Rizal sent cigars, cigarettes, samples of clothing, even a wooden contraption that was the early version of the cigarette lighter. Those things that Rizal sent are also like time capsules sent over a century ago and now open for study.

People often ask what my stand is on the repatriation of these artifacts. My position is ambivalent. I wish these things were back home, but we must acknowledge the fact that if these things had been in the National Museum and Library before the War, everything would have been destroyed during the Battle for Manila in 1945. If not, all the pests and humidity would have hastened their deterioration. We must be grateful that these artifacts were abroad and have been preserved for our study and enjoyment today. We can only hope that these will be exhibited, accompanied by illustrated exhibition catalogues, so that more Filipinos will know about our past that lies in a foreign land.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

MD Plus

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

THE TITLE I REALLY WANTED FOR TODAY'S COLUMN WAS "The Once and Future Doctor," but because my column is horizontally challenged, space-wise, the title always has to be short.

I'm writing about a bold innovation at Ateneo's new medical school, formally known as the Ateneo School of Medicine and Public Health or ASMPH. They took in its first batch of medical students last June, and in a few years, they will be the first medical students to graduate from a Filipino medical school with two degrees: an MD (doctor of medicine) and an MM (master of management).

People expect medical schools to produce graduates who will excel as clinicians, meaning, graduates practicing medicine in a clinic or hospital setting. The ASMPH hopes to do that, and more. All this goes back to years of planning, starting with the dreams of Dr. Alfredo Bengzon, the ASMPH dean, who assembled a small think-tank to work on his vision. "I want a medical school," he would keep reiterating, "that will produce graduates who excel as clinicians, as administrators and as public health experts."

It's not surprising that such a vision would come from Dr. Bengzon, given his own background and experiences. His specialization is neurology, one of the most complicated medical fields. Later, working with The Medical City, he went on to get a Master's in Business Administration. Eventually, he became Ateneo's vice president for Professional Schools, expanding the MBA program to include two post-graduate degrees specifically targeting health professionals.

Under the Aquino presidency, Dr. Bengzon served as health secretary, which exposed him to the country's many daunting public health problems. His government service wasn't limited to health; when the negotiations around the US bases in the country began, he was appointed head of the Philippine panel, not an easy task. Dr. Bengzon knows what he's talking about when he says health is economic and social and political.

Stateside

The idea of medical schools offering two degrees is not new, at least in the United States. I checked the website of the Association of American Medical Schools and was overwhelmed by the varieties of joint degree programs.

A total of 73 American medical schools offer an MD/MPH (Master's in Public Health) program. The University of Pennsylvania, with its famous Wharton School of Business, was the first to offer a joint MD and MBA program in the 1970s. Today, there are 49 American medical schools that offer such dual degrees.

I think it's significant that Ateneo offers an MM instead of an MBA. An MBA tends to be associated with corporations and for-profit institutions while an MM degree has a broader scope, training people for a wider range of settings—from the Department of Health to the many international health organizations. Ateneo's MM should, hopefully, produce someone who is as comfortable in a corporate setting (which is what many hospitals are) dealing with executives, as well as a community, and with some small town's mayor. The inputs here have come from Dr. Marife Yap, the ASMPH associate dean, who originally came in from community medicine practice. In a way then, Ateneo's MM is an MBA and an MPH rolled into one. (Really now, working for three degrees simultaneously would have been too much.)

What are the other American joint degree programs? There are 22 medical schools offering an MD/JD program, meaning, graduates will be both physicians and lawyers. We actually have some of these doctor-lawyers (dokattorneys, Korina Sanchez calls them) but they get there through a long route: a bachelor's degree, followed by medical and law schools taken separately, at least over 12 years.

Many of the American medical schools offer an MD with a Ph.D. in a specialized biomedical field (for example, immunology, neuroscience, toxicology). What surprised me though was that 103 of the medical schools now offer an MD with a postgraduate degree in an interdisciplinary field not directly related to biomedicine. Harvard, for example, offers an MD with a Ph.D. to be chosen from three fields: Health Care Policy, History of Science or Medical Anthropology. Case Western University has an Anthropology and Medicine program where medical students can work toward an MA or Ph.D. in urban health, cross-cultural aging, international health or psychological anthropology.

Staying home

The wave of the future in medical schools isn't just around these dual-degree programs. What we're seeing here is a distinct trend toward producing a "Doctor Plus," a physician who goes beyond biomedicine. In many ways though, this is not new, representing a return to what doctors once were: people who could take time to better understand their patients. So, even without a dual-degree program, many American medical schools are emphasizing a more interdisciplinary curriculum even in their regular medical training. The University of California in San Francisco, for example, devotes its 4th year to advanced studies, where students get to pick from medical humanities, the science of medicine, or global and public health.

Disclosure time: Yes, I've been part of Dr. Bengzon's think-tank from the beginning. We work without compensation, usually on weekends and in late evenings, the joy and fulfillment coming from being able to dream with Dr. Bengzon and other visionaries.

No, I have not left UP (yet). At UP's College of Medicine, I've been working with the Department of Community and Family Medicine to find ways to equip our students to deal with the realities of medicine, outside of hospitals. We send students out for a reality check, in the streets, in the "Quiapo Medical Center" (yes, Plaza Miranda with its medicinal plants and amulets) and further afield. We remind them, too, of the importance of understanding why medicines are expensive, of looking into social and political issues from gender inequity to governance (or its lack thereof).

I think we're doing a fairly good job at UP and ASMPH; in fact, my fear at times is that we might be doing too good a job. Our graduates won't need to go to nursing school if they want to work overseas; instead, they'll be very competitive as an "MD plus" when applying for the World Health Organization and other international agencies, as well as American and European hospitals that emphasize cultural competence or the ability to work with people of different ethnicities.

I can only hope that our alternative medical curricula are also strong enough to produce doctors who will be inspired to stay on and serve in the Philippines, partly because of patriotism but also, in a practical way, because they will be less prone to despair. These would be physicians confident in their ability to use the sophisticated technologies of the 21st century, but also mindful of the need to put down their stethoscopes and CT scan reports and return to the patient—listening, observing and understanding.

Arrest of journalists denounced

LETTERS

THE CHARTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL PEN (Poets and Playwrights, Essayists and Novelists) upholds freedom of expression and free access to public information.

PEN stands for the principle of unhampered transmission of thought within each nation and between nations, and our members pledge themselves to opposing any form of suppression of the freedom of expression in the country and community to which they belong, as well as throughout the world wherever this is possible.

PEN declares its stand for a free press and opposes arbitrary censorship in times of peace.

Therefore, based on its charter, the Philippine Center of the International PEN condemns in the strongest terms the state's manhandling and arrest of members of the press during the Nov. 29, 2007 incident at the Peninsula Manila. It also urges state authorities and their law enforcement instrumentalities—the police and the military—to respect the constitutional right of the press to access, without obstruction, public information and to report it freely.

The Philippine PEN likewise exhorts state authorities to recognize the critical importance of the press and the pen to society and to the world—that access to public information and its free dissemination by the press are crucial to the health and survival of democracy and of a regime of freedoms.

The Philippine PEN strongly urges the state to respect and observe the freedom of the press and the freedom of the pen.

This statement has been unanimously adopted last Dec. 9 by delegates to the 50th anniversary congress of the Philippine Center of the International PEN.

—ELMER ORDOÑEZ,
conference director,
50th PEN Congress

Marine's conviction a year after

WOMEN IN SUPPORT OF NICOLE of the Subic rape case recently marked last Dec. 4 the first anniversary of the 40-year conviction of US Marine Daniel Smith by Judge Benjamin Pozon.

We will not let this landmark decision become a paper victory for Nicole and the Filipino people.

We believe that the custody of an accused and convicted US soldier should be given to the host country. We continue to fear that Smith will be shipped out of the country.

On Nov. 14, the Task Force Subic Rape (TFSR) wrote a letter to Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno to request a check on Smith. The request was immediately turned down and the group was reassured of the Department of Interior and Local Government's efforts to "regularly and randomly" check on the convict.

This response could not allay our doubts on Smith's whereabouts in the light of the statement of Interior Undersecretary Marius Corpus, head of the five-man panel to monitor Smith, that he "depended on reports from the US Embassy." Corpus gave this answer when media asked where Smith was in April 2007, when he was reportedly hospitalized. The DILG's reply was unassertive and too careful. It sounded too hospitable in dealing with our American "guest" who was proven to have done harm to a Philippine national.

The DILG's official response, together with the Department of Foreign Affairs' assurances that Smith is still at the US Embassy, is nothing more than an empty pronouncement that needs proof. Reports from groups in Korea and Japan dealing with the same problem of custody attest that to evade serving of sentence, convicted US soldiers are usually shipped out from those countries. Once they're back in the hands of US authorities, they are either discharged or given a lighter sentence in a US military court.

With Smith's 40-year sentence, his ship-out is more likely. It is then important to ensure that Smith is not shipped out, for it will again render a Court of Appeals decision "moot and academic" as what happened to the petition for custody because Smith was already in the custody of the US Embassy.

In a recent letter to us, Nicole said that "she is trying hard to move on, no matter how difficult it is." Her victory must be made complete. We will continue to support her and will see to it that justice shall not be denied her and our nation.

—ESPERANZA SANTOS,
steering committee member,
Task Force Subic Rape,
32 Masikap St.,
Barangay Pinyahan, Quezon City

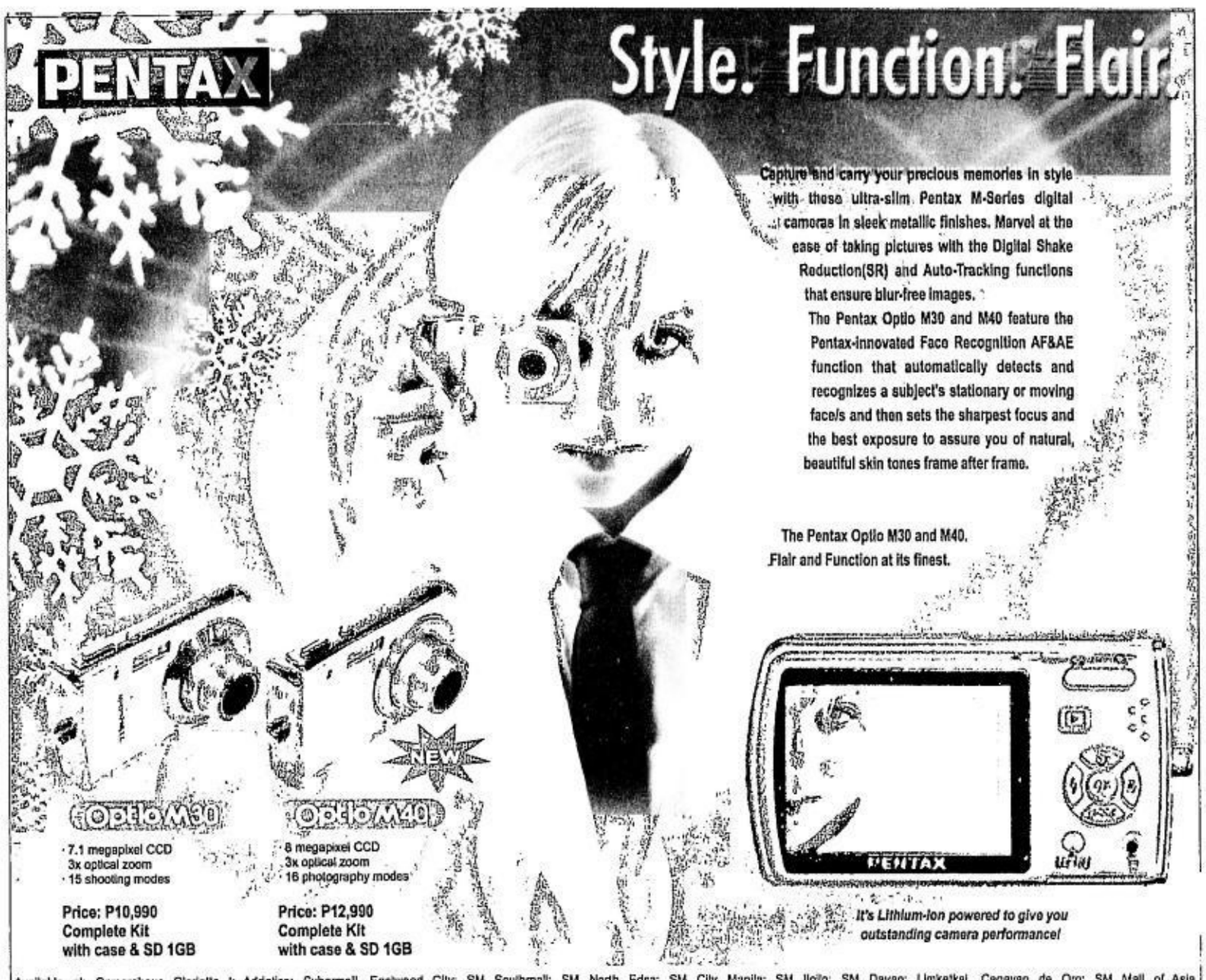
House didn't cut judiciary budget

THIS PERTAINS TO THE ARTICLE hitting the House of Representatives for the cut in the judiciary's budget. (INQUIRER, 11/30/07)

The proposed P14.34 billion judiciary budget for 2008 was submitted by the judiciary to the Department of Budget and Management, but the DBM proposed only P9.68 billion for Congress' consideration. The chair of the Committee on Appropriations, Rep. Edcel C. Lagman and I, as sub-committee chair, did our very best to maintain the DBM-submitted budget. The House even increased the judiciary's budget by allocating an additional amount of more than P200 million for the Juvenile Justice Welfare System and for the construction of proposed Sandiganbayan halls of justice in Baguio City. The House-approved judiciary budget is almost P9.89 billion. In other words, the House never cut a single centavo from the judiciary's budget.

In fairness to the DBM, all proposed budgetary requirements submitted by the different agencies to the department were also cut. To my mind, this is the most logical move by the executive department to avoid big budget deficits. The DBM can appropriate only the expected revenues for that fiscal year.

—REP. EMIL L. ONG,
2nd District, Northern Samar



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900 pilgrims can't board Mecca flights

COTABATO CITY—SOME 900 MUSLIM PILGRIMS to Mecca have been stranded at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport since early this week due to limited number of flights available from a Saudi airline firm authorized to ferry Filipinos for this year's hajj.

'I never thought the number of participants to the hajj would reach this big...'

Lanao del Sur Gov. Mamintal Adiong Jr., currently head of the Philippine delegation, has sought the help of President Macapagal-Arroyo and the Saudi government to help remedy the situation.

"This is our problem and I hope the President can arrange for additional flights with the Saudi government," Adiong said.

Unlike previous pilgrimages, this year's shuttling of Filipino pilgrims to and from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is monopolized by the Saudi Airlines, the flag carrier of the oil-rich monarchy.

Advance party

"With proper arrangement and coordination by the two states, perhaps our own Philippine Airlines can come to the rescue," Adiong said of the more than 900 stranded pilgrims who are mostly from Lanao.

Gov. Zaldy Ampatuan, of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, who left Monday along with his entourage, said he will see what he can do to solve the flight shortage while at the Holy Land.

Ali Sangki, executive director of the Office on Muslim Affairs (OMA), said the nine-flight allotment was pursuant to a memorandum of agreement entered into by the Saudi Airlines and the OMA under its former head, Jerry Tomawis.

During Tomawis' watch, the OMA allotted space for only some 3,500 pilgrims maximum.

This made the airline company allow a nine-flight schedule for the entire duration of the Islamic journey with an extra accommodation of up to 500 more passengers.

More pilgrims

This year, the number of pilgrims has soared to more than 5,400.

"I never thought the number of participants to the hajj would reach this big," said Adiong.

Sangki noted that since last week the number of pilgrims from the ARMM provinces of Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao and Shariff Kabunsuan had started to swell, prompting him to alert Saudi Ambassador Mohammad Ameen Wali. *Charlie C. Señase, Inquirer Mindanao*

TIRED and muddied, Mt. Banahaw treasure hunters land in the Tayabas City police station and face criminal charges for violating forestry laws and illegal possession of firearms. DELFIN T. MALLARI JR./INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

Treasure hunters held for Banahaw desecration

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
Inquirer Southern Luzon

TAYABAS CITY—HUNTERS OF the fabled Yamashita treasure are leaving trails of destruction in Mt. Banahaw and are frustrating efforts to rehabilitate the mystical mountain, according to a top official of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Saying the "real treasure" is Banahaw itself, Sally Pangan, DENR protected area supervisor, appealed to the believers of the Yamashita treasure to stop their futile search. She said she had yet to hear any reports of discovery.

Legend has it that before his surrender, World War II Japanese Gen. Tomoyuki Yamashita ordered the burial of treasures plundered from Asian temples in different parts of the country.

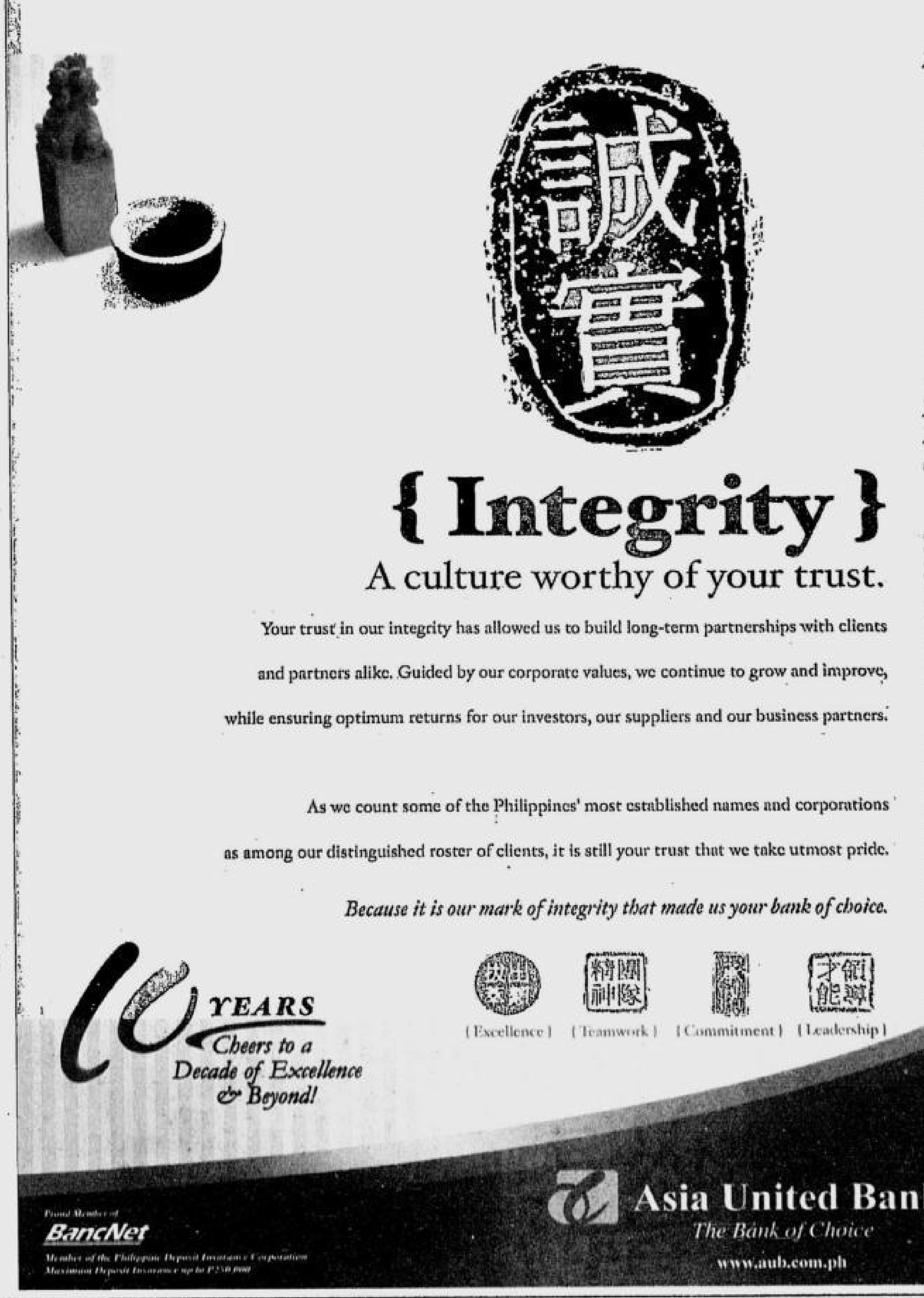
In 2004, several days before the Holy Week, the Protected Area Management Board put up barbed wires along several trails leading to the mountain's bosom to start a five-year program to resurrect its natural resources. Three years later, the mountain showed signs of restored endemic lives.

"We appeal for the cessation of all illegal activities on Banahaw. Let us all give the mountain the chance to resurrect itself and return to its lost grandeur," said Jay Lim, program officer of Tanggol Kalikasan-Southern Tagalog (TK-ST).

At least 22 people believed to be engaged in illegal treasure hunting were arrested on Dec. 1 by Pangan's group, together with soldiers, police officers and TK-ST volunteers. For several days, the group had dug inside a cave in the mountain village of Lalo here but failed to find any gold or treasure.

The raiders also seized one M-16 rifle; three .45 cal. pistols, one .38 cal. revolver, assorted explosive devices and chemicals. This indicated that the group's expedition was well-funded.

The treasure hunters, some dressed in fatigues, yielded identification cards supposedly issued by the Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon) police regional special operation group, the military's National Capital Region Command, National Bureau of Investigation and the Ombudsman.



Serving and Sheltering the Filipino for 27 years

The Pag-IBIG Fund has established a solid reputation among government agencies for providing excellent service to its members. In the housing sector, it has maintained its role as the biggest source of funds for the government's housing program, and as the top housing loan provider among all financial institutions in the country. Now on its 27th year, the Fund continues to build on its reputation through constant improvement and stronger delivery of its housing mandate.

Transforming the Housing Sector

The Pag-IBIG Fund has helped over half a million members achieve their dream of owning a home. The number continues to grow today, and has been growing faster in the last six years—thanks to dynamic reforms that have dramatically transformed its housing loan program.

In 2000, a Pag-IBIG member can only borrow up to P500,000. The interest rate was at 16% per annum. The lowest housing package at that time was only up to P180,000 at an interest rate of 9% per annum. Over P180,000 up to P250,000 the interest rate was 12% per annum.

The housing loan program got a much-needed shot in the arm with the drastic reforms introduced in 2001. The maximum loanable amount was increased threefold — from P500,000 to P2 million.

The lowest housing loan package was retained at 9% per annum up to P180,000. Loans over P180,000 up to P500,000 were given a 12% interest, and the highest loans over P500,000 up to P2 million were charged an interest of 14% per annum.

Six years and four more amendments later, Pag-IBIG's housing loan program now has the lowest interest rates in the market, and is accessible even to minimum wage earners—thanks to the direction of its Chairman and the country's housing czar Vice President Noli "Kabayan" De Castro.

Today, a loan of up to P300,000 payable in 30 years will have a monthly amortization of only P1.789.65 (principal and interest only) at today's 6% interest rate. A similar loan in taken out in 2000, with an interest of 16%, would have a monthly amortization of P4,034.27.

For a loan worth P500,000 payable in 30 years, a borrower in 2000 had monthly amortizations of P6,723.78. Today's borrower has to pay only P3,326.51 per month.

For a housing unit worth of P500,000, the monthly amortization for a loan taken out in 2001 is P5,143.06 for 30 years. If you borrowed the same amount this year, you will only have to pay P3,326.51 every month with the same repayment period.

Today, even loans ranging from P750,000 up to P2 million are payable up to a maximum of 30 years. For a P750,000 loans at the maximum term, the monthly amortization is only of P4,989.77. For P2 million, it is P18,294.79. Back in 2000, Pag-IBIG members could only dream of borrowing those amounts.

As a result of the dynamic reforms in its housing loan program, the number of members who have actually availed of housing loans has been increasing dramatically.

In 2001, Pag-IBIG released P3.82 billion in its end-user housing loan program. Last year, the Fund's total loan take-outs amounted to P16.10 billion—a giant leap of more than 321% compared to the 2001 figure.

Today, as the housing industry enjoys another boom period, the Pag-IBIG Fund's housing loan program ensures that low-to middle-income earning Filipino workers are not left out.

Commited to Excellent Public Service

Already admired for the competence and integrity of its workforce, the Pag-IBIG fund continues to seek new ways to improve its service to its members.

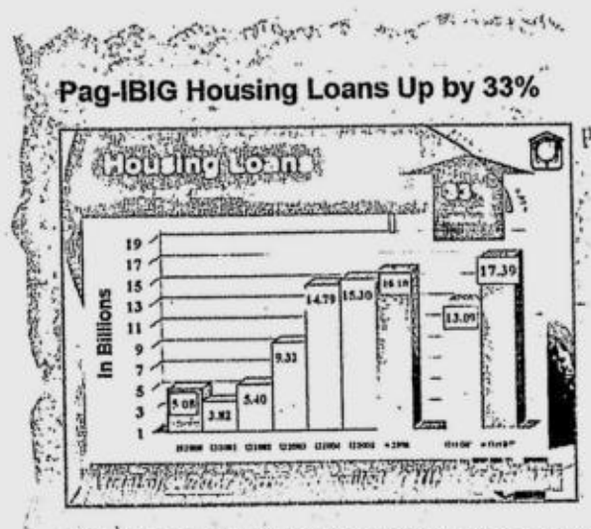
In 2006, the Pag-IBIG Fund launched the Lingkod Pag-IBIG campaign, the internal component of its Tapat sa Pag-IBIG campaign. It's objective: to transform all Pag-IBIG offices nationwide as centers of excellence in government service by committing every employee to stringent standards of efficient and friendly service.

The campaign created a brand for the Fund's service, and what it stands for: "Lingkod Pag-IBIG: Serbisyong Tapat sa Bawat Miyembro." Creative visual materials were placed prominently in all offices, to create awareness and elicit support and cooperation among all personnel.

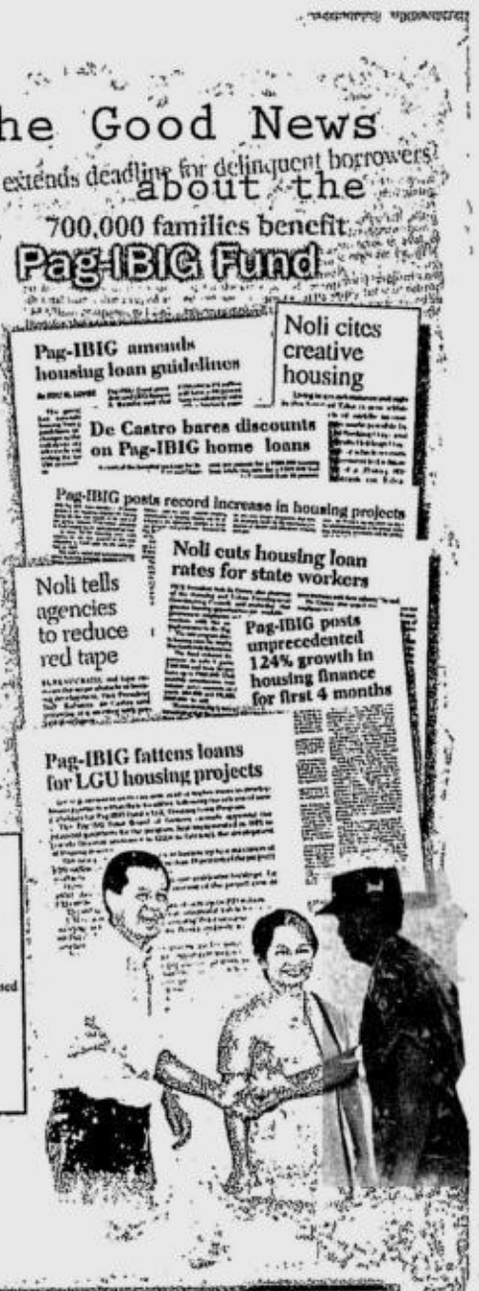
To support the campaign and assess its effectiveness, the Fund implemented a client feedback system, allowing members to comment on the quality of service they experienced in any Pag-IBIG office.

The campaign is paying off—Pag-IBIG members are getting even better services today, as confirmed by the Civil Service Commission. This year, the CSC recognized a number of Pag-IBIG frontliners in various branches and divisions through the Public Service Delivery Audit/Assistance Program (PASADA). The Fund's PASADA awardees exemplify the quality of Lingkod Pag-IBIG that all the men and women of Pag-IBIG adhere to.

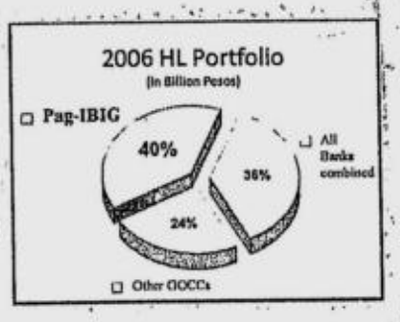
But what many people outside of Pag-IBIG do not know is that the Fund has been delivering excellent service for many years despite a serious organizational handicap.



As of October 2007, the Pag-IBIG Fund has released P17.38 billion in total loans under its End-User Financing program, 33% percent higher for the same period last year.



Pag-IBIG is RP's Biggest Shelter Financing Institution



The Fund maintains its lead in shelter financing, accounting for 39% of the entire Philippine mortgage market today—surpassing the accomplishment of every other institution by a wide margin.

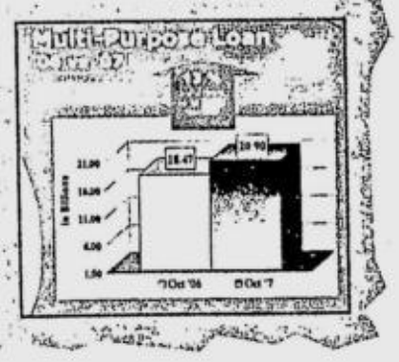
Most Affordable Housing Loans in the Philippines

LOAN AMOUNT	New Interest
Up to P300,000	6%
Above P300,000 up to P750,0000	7%
Above P750,000 up to P2,000,000	10.5%

Under the leadership of VP and HUDCC Chairman Noli "Kabayan" De Castro, Pag-IBIG housing loans have some of the lowest interest rates in the Philippine market today, especially on loan packages targeting low- and average-income earners. Coupled with longer repayment periods —up to 30 years for all loan amounts—borrowers can avail of loans with monthly amortizations that are lower than average house rentals.

Multi-Purpose Loans Increase by 13%

From January to October 2007, the Fund disbursed P20.9 billion in Multi-Purpose Loans (MPL) for the immediate financial needs of 1,282,754 members, topping its 2006 MPLs for the same period by 13%. In the last two years, close to 3,000,000 members have benefited from Pag-IBIG's MPL Program.



Pag-IBIG has been operating under the same organizational structure since 1989, when the thrust of the Fund was directed mainly at provident savings benefits. That structure became inadequate when Pag-IBIG membership became mandatory, and its housing finance program was strengthened. With a fixed table of organization and staffing pattern, the Fund had to bulk up its workforce by hiring contractual and casual employees. Over the years, the need for additional personnel led to the number of contractuals exceeding that of regular employees.

By next year, this imbalance will have been addressed with the completion of Pag-IBIG's broadest organizational reform to date.

Earlier this year, Pag-IBIG secured the final approval for its revised Table of Organization and staffing pattern, with sufficient plantilla positions to serve the Fund's mandates and stengthen its housing function. The Fund aims to complete its implementation in 12 months time.

In addition, the Pag-IBIG Fund's Chairman, Vice President Noli de Castro, has directed the further reduction of bureaucratic red tape, particularly in its shelter financing programs. Along with the great improvements in its housing loan program, this will further improve Pag-IBIG's service to individual and institutional borrowers.

In its 27th year of service, Pag-IBIG promises to be an even better organization, with greater capability to carry out its responsibilities and face new challenges.

Prosecutor sues Gonzalez for graft, poll offense

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—ILOILO CITY Prosecutor Efrain Baldago, who was earlier dismissed by Malacañang for graft, has filed graft charges against his boss, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez Sr.

In a three-page complaint filed at the Ombudsman-Visayas on Wednesday, Baldago accused Gonzalez of violating Republic Act No. 3019 or the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act. Also named respondent was Assistant City Prosecutor Peter Baliao.

In his complaint, Baldago alleged that Gonzalez "forced" him to file a travel leave on Jan. 10 this year.

"Starting the month of December 2006, I was subjected to intense pressure from then Acting Secretary of Justice Raul Gonzalez Sr. for me to take an indefinite leave of absence without citing any legal ground," said Baldago in his complaint.

He said he filed a request to travel "in compliance" with a verbal directive of Gonzalez, which he reiterated several times through his executive assistant lawyer Eldrid Antiquera.

Baldago claimed that Gonzalez wanted him out of the office so he could not act as vice chair of the Iloilo City Board of Canvassers during the national and local elections last May because his son and namesake Iloilo Rep. Raul Gonzalez Jr. was running for reelection.

Baldago is identified with former Senate President Franklin Drilon who broke off from the administration and called for resignation of President Macapagal-Arroyo on July 2005.

Baldago said he decided to file for a sick leave after his travel leave was approved on April 24, 2007. But before he could do so, Gonzalez had appointed Assistant Prosecutor Fiscal Peter Baliao as acting city prosecutor. This allegedly violated the Revised Administration Code of 1987, which prohibits the reassignment of public officials within three months before any elections.

However, Gonzalez denied that he violated any laws or regulations.

"Anybody can dig his own grave," Gonzalez told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

He said that it is within his authority to reassign prosecutors and it was Baldago who had filed a travel leave to go to the United States with his family.

"He is a just a mere fiscal and he cannot dictate to the justice secretary," said Gonzalez.

He said he would also enforce his Dec. 7 memorandum reassigning Baldago to either the Office of the Regional State Prosecutor or the Office of the Chief State Prosecutor, pending the finality of a decision of the Office of the President dismissing Baldago for graft.

"If he wants, he can stay there and starve to death in his office," said Gonzalez.

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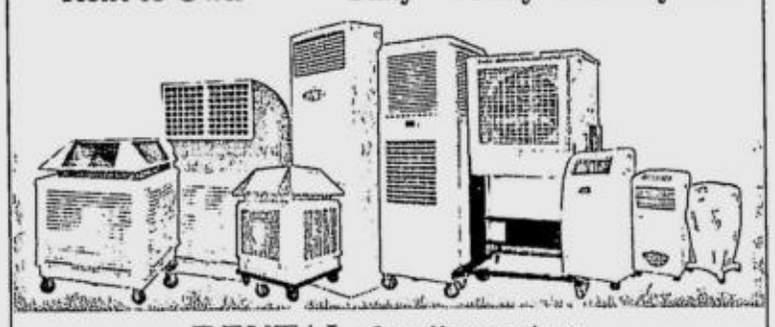
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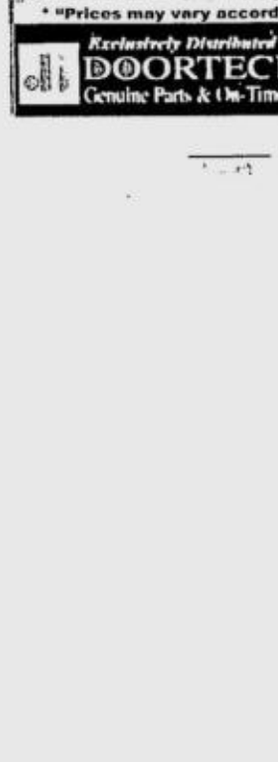
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VEGETABLES form what looks like a floral arrangement in La Union, a symbol of how important vegetables are in trading in northern provinces. EUSEBIO AGUINALDO/CONTRIBUTOR

Altering veggie trucks illegal, traders warned

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—THE DEPARTment of Transportation and Communication (DOTC) in the Cordillera has advised the region's vegetable truck operators not to modify the original make or model of their vehicles or they will be sued.

Lawyer Federico Mandapat, DOTC director for the Cordillera, said any change in the vehicle's axle to make a rear double tire system become single tire is considered as an alteration, making the vehicle ineligible for registration with the Land Transportation Office (LTO).

"The change is called conversion. It is illegal since it was done without DOTC approval and the trucks are not roadworthy anymore," Mandapat said.

Mandapat said a DOTC memorandum circular classified conversion as a reckless driving offense since a driver should not use a vehicle that is considered unsafe.

He said stopping the trips of converted vehicles in the Cordillera formed part of his office's bid to rid the region of "colorum" vehicles and public utility vehicles with expired franchise.

The LTO central office, Mandapat said, issued a memorandum circular on Nov. 8 directing massive operations against illegal franchises and private vehicles operating as "for hire" but without a valid permit from the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB).

But the province's vegetable drivers and operators disputed the DOTC's conclusions that converted vehicles are not safe to drive since they are prone to mechanical defects that could lead to road accidents.

Emily Ugay, president of the Benguet-Urdaneta Vegetable Truckers and Traders Association, said based on the drivers' experiences, single tire vehicles are better to operate since they have stronger brakes.

"In fact, many of us found that double tire vehicles converted as single tire are very appropriate to the province because of the challenge posed by the high altitude terrain to vegetable trucks," she said.

Ugay said many farmers have altered their vehicles and these were registered with the LTO. She said conversion was apt for the delivery of vegetables to the market.

Delmar Cariño, Inquirer Northern Luzon

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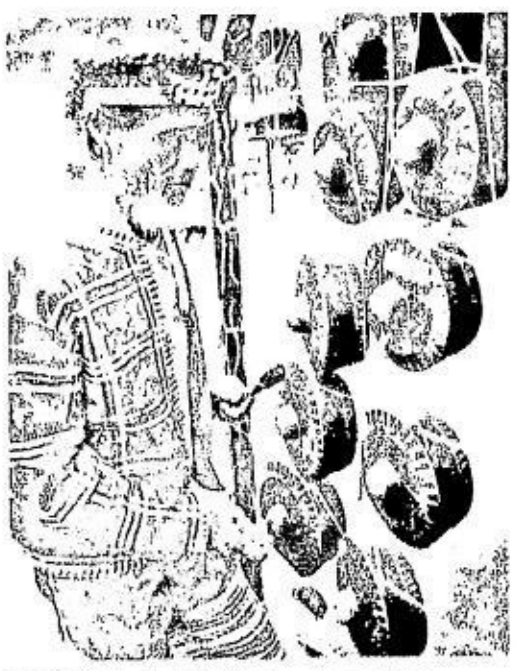


TRIBAL leader Datu Jaime Epe, of the Manobo clan, performs in Davao City. In Surigao, Manobos have fled their homes amid a military offensive against the NPA.
DENNIS JAY SANTOS/INQUIRER MINDANAO

Army tells Manobos it's safe to come home

DAVAO CITY—THE MILITARY GAVE its word to Manobo evacuees from Lianga, Surigao del Sur, that it was safe for them to return to their homes although offensives were continuing against communist guerrillas in the Andap Valley near their communities.

Gen. Cardozo Luna, head of the Eastern Mindanao Command, on Thursday said New People's Army (NPA) rebels have already been forced into the hinterlands of Andap Valley, away from the populated village of Lianga.

Luna said this was an indication that the Manobo villages, that have turned into ghost towns, might be returning to life again.

"The NPA rebels are no longer in their villages," Luna said.

But the evacuees refuse to return home as reports kept pouring in of abuses committed by soldiers in the course of their pursuit of the rebels.

The military rejected an appeal for soldiers to stop the offensives.

"Massive combat operations are being undertaken by the 401st Infantry Brigade... to clear the area," said Luna.

He said there will be no let-up in the military offensives "in the greater interest of the people in the area."

Luna said the evacuation of Manobos from the area was induced by the guerrillas and guerrilla organizations. He refused to identify these groups.

"They forced the civilians to evacuate so as to portray a chaotic and violent situation in the area, a situation which is favorable for them," said Luna.

He said evacuees were calling for a stop to military offensives because they had been infiltrated by rebels.

"Some of the rebels have been reported to have mingled with the civilians," he said.

This may be the reason soldiers, under Col. Jose Viscarra of the 401st IB, were reported to have sneaked into the evacuation centers in Lianga, San Agustin and Tago towns.

Human rights group Karapatan accused them of witch-hunting.

Annalyn Lumawag, secretary general of Karapatan-Caraga, said last Dec. 9, a six-soldier dental team arrived in Lianga but it didn't just check the dental health of the evacuees, but took pictures of the Manobos, too.

"Even in evacuation centers... the harassment continues," Lumawag said.

That night, Lumawag said, soldiers also insisted on showing to the evacuees, many of them children, a film that features sex and violence.

She said support for the evacuees were coming in because donors have seen the evacuees' condition.

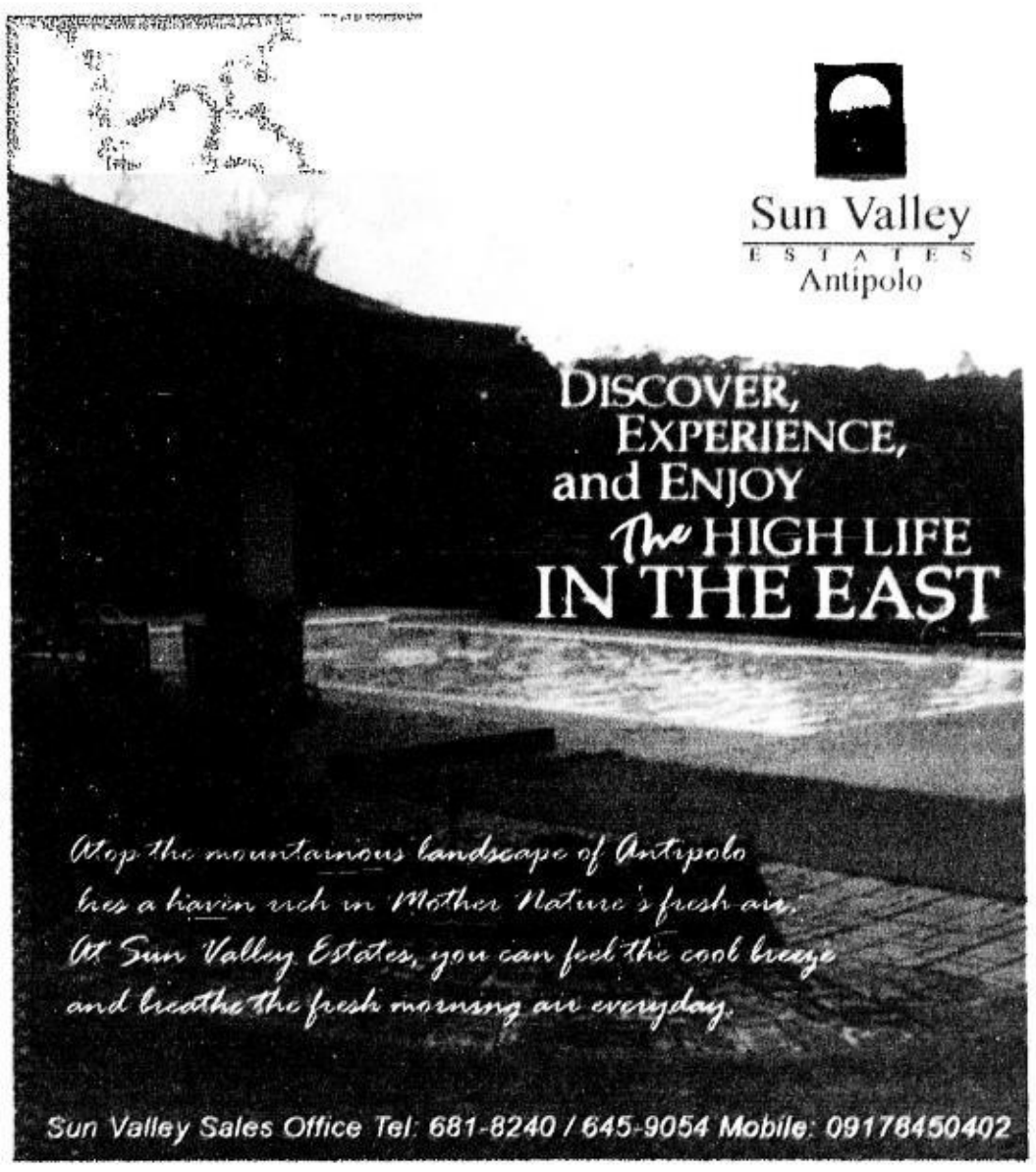
Luna denied reports about military abuses.

"Yes there was evacuation of civilians... but we are deliberate on this operation exercising prudence...," Luna said.

Lumawag scored the military's insinuation that the evacuation was upon the prodding of nongovernment and human rights groups.

She said the military was obviously referring to Karapatan.

"The military obviously considers the lumad simple-minded and beyond rational thinking," she said. "The military should stop lying." *Jeffrey M. Tupas, Mindanao Bureau*



A WORKER, with virtually no protection, continues to package fireworks in one of dozens of firecracker factories in Bocaue, Bulacan, the country's firecracker capital. Health officials are reviving a campaign to ban firecrackers during New Year revelry, but there is little hope anyone would heed it.
EDWIN BACASMAS

Health execs tell public firecrackers contain horse manure, carry tetanus

BAGUIO CITY—HEALTH OFFICIALS warned the public on the use of firecrackers because many of these contain ingredients, such as horse manure, that carry the tetanus virus.

In a forum here on Wednesday, health experts said reports reaching them showed that some manufacturers mix dried horse manure with other chemicals to make the firecracker's blast louder.

Dr. Manuel Quirino, emergency room chief of the Baguio General Hospital and Medical Center, said some manufacturers use manure because it is cheaper than chemicals used in their business.

"Manufacturers have been using horse manure in almost all [types of] firecrackers for a long time because they want to save money. If these firecrackers explode in your hands, you will not only be hurt, but you will get tetanus," Quirino said in a forum on the Department of Health's "Iwas Paputok" program on Wednesday.

He said horse manure contains nitrate found in explosive materials.

Horse manure is used in most firecrackers but larger amounts are found in cheaper firecrackers such as the "Five Star," "Two Star" and "One Star," he said.

He asked parents to discourage their children from picking up dud firecrackers that usually litter the streets after the New Year revelry to avoid injuries from accidental explosions.

"We ask parents to be more responsible. If you see firecrackers scattered around, please sweep them or submerge them in water so children will not play with them," said Quirino.

> 'If these firecrackers explode in your hands, you will not only be hurt, but you will get tetanus...'

Dr. Myrna Cabotaje, DOH Cordillera director, said despite their warnings and campaign against the use of firecrackers, people still use them because they have been part of the traditional New Year celebrations.

"For [Filipinos], the New Year celebration is never complete without firecrackers. Firecrackers make them happy [and some] will just stop if they experience accidents. Children injured [by firecracker] blasts usually develop trauma," she said.

She said the DOH and other government agencies had tried to push the regulation on the use of strong firecrackers but their records showed that even harmless sparklers like luces, Roman candle and fountain have become sources of injuries.

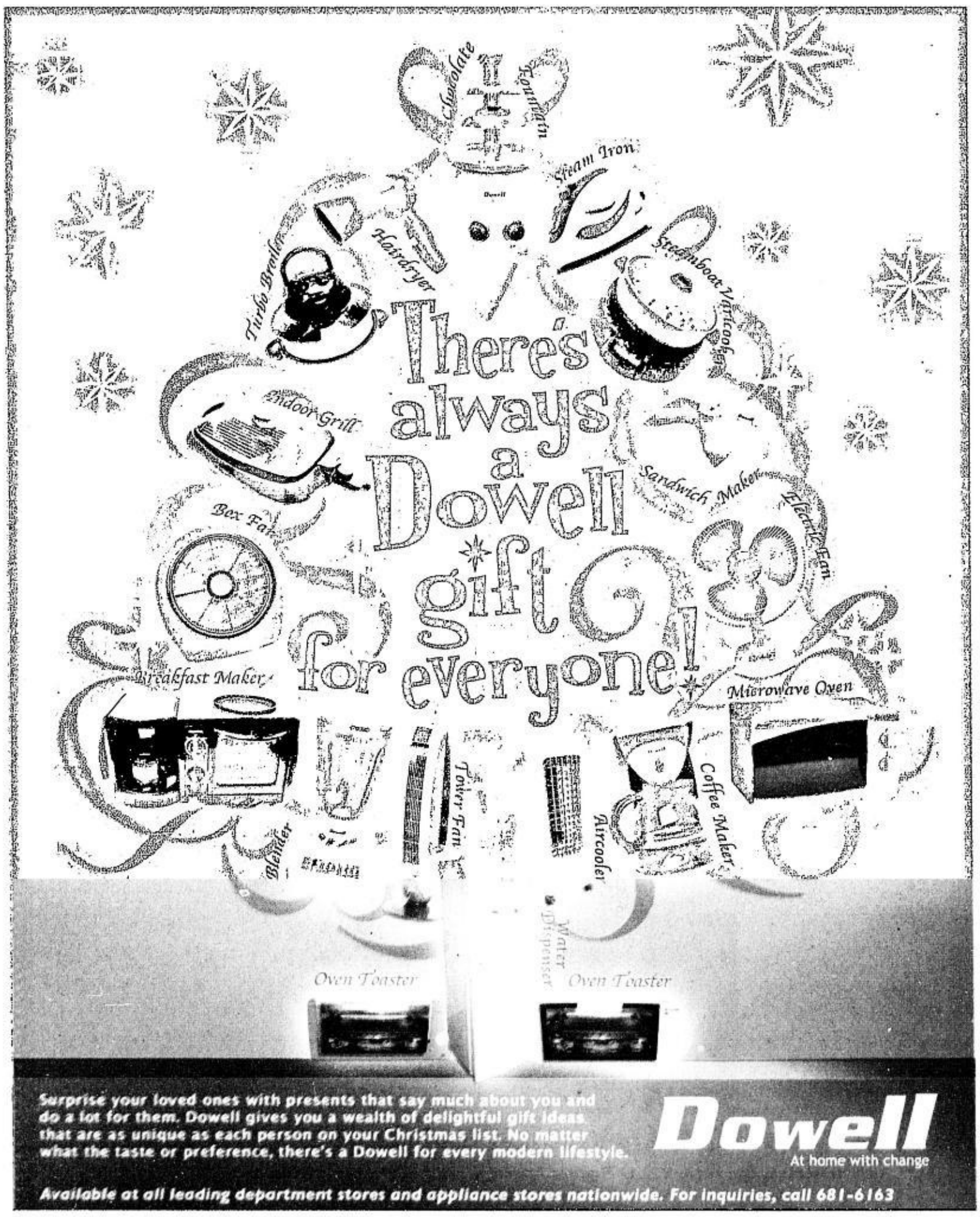
"We used to provide tips on how to use firecrackers properly, but we realized that we were encouraging the public to use the firecrackers in a way. We have already stopped giving tips and intensify antifirecracker campaign," said Cabotaje.

She said the DOH would campaign for the use of *torotot* (toy horns), drums or pots to make noise in welcoming the New Year, to avoid firecracker-related accidents.

She said despite their warnings, injuries and deaths due to firecracker blasts and stray bullets continue to increase.

DOH Cordillera records showed that 99 firecracker-related injuries were reported in the Cordillera from Dec. 31, 2006 to Jan. 4, 2007.

The figure was 48 percent higher than the 67 cases reported during the same period in 2005 and 2006. *Desiree Caluza, Inquirer Northern Luzon*



For just and genuine countryside development

San Miguel Foods Inc. (SMFI) would like to set the record straight on the ongoing development of its agro-industrial facility in Sumilao, Bukidnon.

"We are buyers in good faith, upholding the highest level of professionalism and responsible corporate conduct in all our undertakings.

Our parent company, San Miguel Corporation, is committed to its role as a catalyst in countryside development.

Our P2.4 billion agro-industrial project will bring enormous livelihood opportunities and uplift the lives of farmers and residents in the province of Bukidnon. Project development is ongoing.

The agro-industrial complex with state-of the-art piggery farm, feedmill, post-harvest facility, will result in better corn prices for farmers, thus better incomes, as it will displace all the traders and "middle-men" who have long exploited low farm-gate prices during harvest periods.

We consulted the local community through various public hearings and secured Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC), before implementing the project.

The various farmer-leaders in Sumilao were also actively engaged in a constructive dialogue with the company in discussing and finalizing the blueprint and vision of the agro-industrial complex.

This blueprint was approved by the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) based on earlier exemption of the property from coverage of the CARP as upheld by the Supreme Court.

Our sincere belief is that San Miguel can make a difference in Sumilao, Bukidnon. But to be able to move forward, the agro-industrial project must be allowed to be completed.

Finally, we look forward to playing a constructive role in finding ways to solve the issues - - one that will be beneficial to business, the farmers and the entire province of Bukidnon within the framework of the rule of law."

SAN MIGUEL
FOODS, INC.

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9:00 - 10:00 A.M. Let's March for the Centennial Parade on Historic Mendiola Street

10:00- 11:00 A.M. Let's Pay Homage to our Beloved Founder with Wreath Laying Rites at the Librada Avelino Garden

COME IN THE AFTERNOON!

4:00 - 5:00 P.M. Get into festive mood as the CEU Marching Band plays at the Registration Area

5:00 - 7:00 P.M. Have your fill! Free, flowing, Cocktails for all...
Join the Campus Tour and go down memory lane...
Get on your feet for the Alumni Fellowship...
sing songs of our hey days to the accompaniment of Gloria Gatmaitan and Her Band...
dance the waltz, tango, mambo, boogie, cha-cha, let's rock and roll, let's twist again, do the salsa, all together now, for the L.A. Walk, the Pops...

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7:30 P.M. Be there for the Once-in- a-Lifetime Centennial Dinner Buffe
Sumptuous! A party like no other!

8:30 P.M. Don't ever miss the CENTENNIAL PROGRAM
Recognition of Centennial Jubilarians
Centennial Homecoming Address by CEU President, Dr. Ma. Cristina D. Padolina
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Watch again...
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Nabasag ang Banga
from *Dalagang Bukid,*
The Tagalog version of *L'ibiamo*
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You just have to be there for the Launching of the CEU Centennial Coffee Table Book, *Centro Escolar University at 100 Years: The Spirit Lives On*
Witness again the Rigodon de Honor to be participated in by administrators, faculty members, alumni, and students.

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10:30 P.M. Welcome the Christmas Season with the traditional anticipated Holy Mass
Misa de Gallo—Unang Simbang Gabi sa Sentenaryo ng CEU
to be ushered in by the Parade of 100 Pink Christmas Lanterns
March again with the 100 Torch Parade
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Go out, don't miss the revelry on Mendiola Street
and watch the Amazing Centennial Fireworks
Then come again to the Librada Avelino Garden
for the Centennial Media Noche
with bilaos full of Puto Bumbong, Bibingka, Sapin-sapin
FREE! FREE! FREE!

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18 civilians freed; Trillanes, Lim charged, detained

From page A1

The others ordered freed were Myrna Buendia, Dominador Rull Jr., Romeo Solis, Roel Gadon, Rommel Loreto, Julian Advincula, Francisco Bosi, Leodor dela Cruz, Sonny Madarang and Francisco Peñaflor.

"This court is not convinced that the accused civilians conspired and confederated with the accused soldiers in taking up arms against the government," the judge said in an 18-page order issued shortly before 2 p.m. yesterday.

"Clearly, a much stronger showing of probable cause must be shown," Alameda said, adding that "mere presence at the scene of the crime ... would not make one a conspirator in the act of rebellion."

He also observed that the investigating prosecutors had "in some respects exaggerated the facts from the point of view of the prosecution."

Even before the Nov. 30 inquest, Guingona and Labayen, along with former University of the Philippines president Francisco Nemenzo and artist Bibeth Orteza Siguion Reyna, were released on the recognizance of private individuals for humanitarian and health reasons.

Collective shrug

The Philippine National Police shrugged its collective shoulders at Alameda's ruling.

"We respect the process of the courts," said PNP Director General Avelino Razon.

Director Geary Barias, chief of the National Capital Region Police Office, said the PNP had no recourse but to comply.

"It's a judicial process. What can we do? We cannot do otherwise but follow the order of the court," he said.

According to Barias, the 14 civilians still detained at the Camp Crame Custodial Center should have been released by last night after "some procedures," including a medical examination and the signing of some release documents.

Lawyer Ernesto Francisco later said only 10 civilians were scheduled to leave the custodial center last night, and Reyes, Guevarra, Bautista and Peñaflor were to stay.

Francisco said Reyes was to celebrate Mass there today, and the three others had cited "security concerns" in deciding to spend the night.

He said the mood in the custodial center was happy.

Dr. Editha Martinez of the PNP Crime Laboratory told reporters that the detained civilians were "all OK," and that they bore "no signs of torture whatsoever."

No proof

Alameda said the evidence presented by the panel of prosecutors merely showed that the civilians had been arrested for ignoring the police call to get out of the hotel, and was far from the proof needed to indict them for rebellion.

"Even the alleged acts committed and utterances made by [the accused civilians] ... allegedly in support of their objective to overthrow the government are not sufficient to establish probable cause for rebellion," he said.

The judge said that even if it were true that some of the civilians had uttered words against the government, it did not mean they were complicit in the offense.

"These isolated facts without any antecedents to explain them cannot be given great weight nor can they be presumed to indicate participation or cooperation in the criminal act, which legally determines complicity in a crime," he said.

But Alameda said the evidence against Trillanes, Lim and the junior officers who holed up at the Peninsula for seven hours could "only sustain probable cause."

"The question whether there is more than probable cause to indict the above-named accused for rebellion is not difficult to discern," he said.

'A crime of multitudes'

Citing Article 134 of the Revised Penal Code, as amended by Republic Act No. 6968, Alameda said that "by its very nature, rebellion is essentially a crime of masses or multitudes involving crowd action with [a] political motive."

He said Trillanes and company were "already active participants even at the inception of their plan to commit the crime of rebellion against the government."

Before noon of Nov. 29, the detained senator and his group walked out of Judge Oscar Pimentel's courtroom—where their trial on coup d'etat charges in connection with the 2003 Oakwood mutiny is being heard—and marched to the Peninsula.

Alameda said the accused soldiers, some of whom were in full battle gear and armed with rifles and short guns, "put [on] their Magdalo armbands and called the people to join them and withdraw their support from the government" while marching in the streets.

Quoting portions of the information filed by the DOJ, he said "the accused then called a press conference and announced their intention to overthrow the government of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo."

Conspiracy

Alameda noted that it was Lim, former commander of the elite Scout Rangers, who publicly read the group's statement:

"We are joining our people in calling for a change in leadership ... We call on the military to withdraw support for Mrs. Arroyo in order to end her unconstitutional and illegal occupation of the presidency."

Said the judge: "Clearly the aforementioned accused soldiers ... conspired and confederated with one another by rising publicly and taking arms against the Philippine government in order to deprive President Arroyo, wholly or partially, from exercising her powers and prerogatives as Chief Executive of the Republic of the Philippines, with the ultimate objective to topple the government and replace it with a new government.

"To attain further their criminal designs of taking arms against the government, the accused even called the members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the [PNP] and the people at large to join them and withdraw allegiance to the present government."

Continued detention

With the finding of probable cause, Alameda issued a commitment order for the continued detention of Trillanes and Lim.

Also ordered to remain in detention were Capt. Gary Alejano, Lt. (SG) James Layug, Lt. (SG) Manuel Cabochan, Lt. (SG) Eugene Gonzalez, 2nd Lt. Jonnel Sanggalang, Lt. (SG) Andy Torrato, Lt. Arturo Pascua Jr., Ensign Armand Pontejos, Capt. Segundino Orfiano, 1st Lt. Billy Pascua, Cpl. Clecarte Dahan, Pfc. Juanito Jilbary, Pfc. Emmanuel Tirador, Pfc. Germain Linde, and Julius Mesa and Cesar Gonzalez, both former petty officers 3.

Capt. Nicanor Faeldon, missing since the failed revolt, was not covered by the order. *With a report from Alcuin Papa*

Journalism: The only private/public job protected by Constitution

THE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS from the opening statement of Antonio Lopez, chair of the Manila Overseas Press Club, at the Senate hearing.

"I come here with a deep sense of anxiety about the future of journalism and media in this country.

In the afternoon and evening of Nov. 29, some 50 journalists were rounded up at the point of the gun, handcuffed, harassed, humiliated, and herded—like cattle, to use Senator Gordon's animal farm language—to a suburban military camp.

The 50 is more than the number—or eight times the number of journalists who were arrested and brought to a military camp in the first 30 days of martial law in September and October of 1972—35 years ago. Those journalists were not arrested by lowly SPOs. They were arrested by officers with the rank of major or colonel. They were not handcuffed. They were invited for questioning and later, brief detention. They knew why they were being arrested—because they were journalists critical of Ferdinand Marcos.

Like common criminals

The journalists caught like common criminals on Nov. 29 were arrested by SPOs, at the point of the gun. The arresting officers were hostile. They bristled with high-powered automatic firearms. They used plastic ties—the kind used to lock check-in luggage to enable the TSA [Transportation Security Administration] at US airports to unlock your luggage to check if there is a bomb or contraband.

Excess baggage

This reduces the journalist to the level of excess baggage—which is exactly how the police and the military treated mediamen at the Peninsula.

The excuse for bringing the journalists to a military camp was for a more efficient processing because the Manila Pen at the time of their arrest was not yet secure—which is a lie. There were more than 1,000 police and military forces at the hotel.

Hotel already 'clean'

Overwhelming, considering there were only 24 military renegades, including the four who apparently escaped. Subsequent cleanup of the hotel showed only two rebel suspects as holdouts. In other words, at the time the journalists were being arrested, the hotel was already "cleaned" of rebel elements, except perhaps for some looters, including the one who got the laptop of the hotel manager.

And the journalists didn't know and never knew until this day why they were being arrested. No martial law was declared on Nov. 29.

Before Nov. 29, the Philippines has had at least 15 coup attempts—small, medium, and large-scale, real and imaginary. Two of them were very successful—against Ferdinand Marcos and against Joseph Estrada.

Which is why journalists will be there to cover it. Whether they will be threatened with arrests or harm or plain murder, the journalists won't mind.

Unelected

Journalism is a profession different from other jobs. It is not like that of a senator or a congressman who enjoys so many perks and access to public money.

We were not elected to our job. Nobody elected us. Just like the president of the Philippines, or the senators, or the congressmen, we don't need to go to school to do our job.

But there is one thing that distinguishes journalism from all other professions. It is the only profession and the only job in the Philippines that is guaranteed (sic) by the Constitution.

Section 4 of the Bill of Rights says "no law shall be passed abridging the freedom of speech, of expression, or of the press..." Or of the press (underscoring mine).

Therefore, the coverage of rebellion must not be subject to ground rules or rules of engagement. To do so would be an abdrigement [of that freedom]."

Media explain critical role in a democracy

From page A1

They made the assertion at a Senate inquiry into the media arrests made after police authorities subdued a revolt led by Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV and Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim in Makati City on Nov. 29.

Nine media practitioners—of whom four, including INQUIRER reporter Gil Cabacungan Jr., covered the incident inside the Peninsula Manila hotel—attended the hearing, which was snubbed by Cabinet officials and the police and military authorities who had ordered the arrests.

The hearing lasted almost as long as the seven-hour standoff at the Peninsula.

In a letter to the Senate committee on justice and human rights, Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro Jr., Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez and Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno said they could not spare the time to attend the hearing because they were "engaged in critical operations" and were in the middle of investigations related to the Nov. 29 event.

The lawmakers roundly decried the snub as an affront to the Senate as an institution. Sen. Francis Escudero, committee chair, issued a reprimand to the three Cabinet members and 11 other officials concerned.

Unacceptable excuse

"Their excuse is unacceptable since they themselves are not part of the operations but their men," said Escudero, who cochaired the hearing with Sen. Gregorio Honasan, chair of the committee on public order and illegal drugs.

Unlike a contempt citation, a reprimand does not come with an arrest order.

The others who were reprimanded were Interior Undersecretary Marius Corpus, Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr., AFP National Capital Region Command chief Maj. Gen. Andy Mesa, Marine chief Brig. Gen. Jonathan Martir, Philippine National Police Director General Avelino Razon Jr., PNP-NCR Command chief Director Geary Barias and five other PNP officials.

But Razon said he was not invited to the hearing in the first place. Also, he said, he had to accompany Ms Arroyo on a visit to Masbate.

They never knew why

Barias said he did not attend the hearing for lack of clearance from Razon: "I cannot attend without an order from my boss. There was no intention to snub the Senate."

After Trillanes and company had been subdued on Nov. 29, police arrested about 50 reporters and media crew who remained inside the Peninsula during the siege.

Most were handcuffed and all were brought to the PNP's Camp Bagong Diwa in Bicutan, Taguig City, where they were "processed" before being released later in the night.

"And the journalists didn't know and never knew until this day why they were being arrested. No martial law was declared on Nov. 29," Antonio Lopez, chair of the Manila Overseas Press Club, said at the hearing. *(Excerpts of Lopez's statement on this page.)*

ABS-CBN news and current affairs head Maria Ressa said the arrest and detention of its crew had undermined the job they had to do in covering the event.

"This sets a dangerous precedent and erodes our country's democracy," she said, adding:

"The need for information increases in times of uncertainty.

"We question the premise that we are obstructing justice."

'Inevitable'

Grace dela Peña-Reyes, GMA 7 assistant vice president for news, said it was "inevitable" that the network's reporters and crew would find themselves in dangerous situations.

But "the decision to stay should be left to media organizations," she stressed.

Cabacungan of the INQUIRER said the police were "never in control of the situation" from the time Trillanes' group occupied the hotel until the police issued a 3 p.m. ultimatum.

"The number of journalists had swelled prior to the police deadline. There was no evacuation plan. There was only General Barias failing to impose his authority on two dozen [rebel] soldiers," Cabacungan said.

"We decided to stay because we wanted to give our readers an eyewitness account of an extremely important crisis situation. We stayed because we believe it is our duty to be there because we are journalists," he added.

NHK Broadcasting reporter Charmaine Deogracias, who was also arrested, said she had stayed on because she assessed the risk to her and her crew to be "benign" compared to other conflict situations she had covered.

ROGER MARGALLO

JOURNALISTS at the Senate inquiry into the arrest of mediamen in the Peninsula siege the critical role of media in conflict situations. Maria Ressa, head of news and public affairs of ABS-CBN; Grace dela Peña-Reyes, GMA 7 assistant vice president for news operation; Dana Bitnag, Focap vice president; Tony Lopez, Manila Oversea Press Club chair, and Butch Canoy, KBP president, listen to the opening statement of CHR Chair Purificacion Quisumbing.

Malaya columnist Ellen Tordesillas described the police treatment of the media as "fascistic."

"Even in armed conflicts, under the Geneva Conventions, journalists enjoy the status of 'protected persons' in recognition of the role they play in society. No democratic country can properly function without a truly free press," she said.

Undermining coverage

Dana Batnag, vice president of the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines, also decried "the way the police undermined the way the media does its work."

Under questioning, Tordesillas and Deogracias said they did not get any order from the authorities to get out of the hotel. Cabacungan recalled that Barias was at the hotel lobby while the reporters were at the mezzanine with Trillanes.

He said Barias had called out: *"Nakikiusap po ako sa inyo, umalis na kayo dito* (We are requesting you to please leave the hotel)."

The three said they were not cuffed because they had protested.

A former newspaper reporter, Senior Prosecutor Velasco, hedged from answering whether the arrests, as well as the succeeding five-hour curfew, were legal.

"Out of deference to [Justice Secretary Gonzalez], I will submit my recommendation as a private citizen, lawyer and former journalist who has covered coup [attempts]," Velasco said.

Senators Benigno Aquino III and Alan Cayetano did not press Velasco after they made their point about the illegality of the police actions. But Senators Jinggoy Estrada and Jamby Madrigal did.

When Estrada asked what crime was committed by the journalists who had refused to leave the hotel, Velasco said: "I'm really very sorry. I have no personal knowledge of what transpired. It might preempt a case that might be filed, which might land in our office."

Later, he said carefully: "My personal opinion, I think, personal opinion *lang po*, the handcuff is not necessary."

Hypothetical question

Sen. Joker Arroyo, who had earlier praised the police and military for crushing the revolt, posed a "hypothetical" question to reporters as to whether they would cross a police line.

"If I was already inside, *hindi na ako lalabas* (I won't go out)," said Tordesillas. But she said she would not hamper police operations.

Cabacungan said that in the case of "a hostage situation," he would leave the site upon orders of the police.

Lopez said he would also leave if it was a hostage situation, a murder case, or a bank robbery. "But if it's rebellion or coup d'etat I will cross the line," he said.

Said Dela Peña-Reyes: "We will not cross the line generally, and I say generally because I don't want to tie our hands."

Ressa said the ABS-CBN crew did leave the site of the Glorietta explosion last month because they did not want to get in the way.

But at the Peninsula, "our reporters were inside before a police line was set up," she pointed out.

Roy Mabasa, president of the National Press Club, said the problem of the police was that the media usually got ahead of them at a crime scene.

Franchises

Arroyo reminded the TV stations of a condition in their franchise against making seditious broadcasts.

Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile outlined a scenario where the government could cut off power to TV transmission lines so they could not broadcast.

Ressa said her network could go to generator power to continue operations.

"In the end it would not be us questioning the government, but the people questioning the government," she said.

Sen. Richard Gordon condemned the police act of handcuffing and herding the media "like cattle," but said he was worried that journalists could have been killed inside the hotel, with the blame later laid on the authorities.

"It's the journalists' call to leave," said Ressa.

"If I got killed, I won't take it against the police," said Tordesillas.

Escudero later said another hearing may no longer be scheduled because he could now make a committee report.

He added that it would be awkward for police to arrest the PNP chief. *With reports from Margaux C. Ortiz and Alcuin Papa*

Gonzalez 'ready' for Senate probe

IN THE AFTERNOON WHILE THE Senate hearing was going on, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez went to see Senate President Manuel Villar at the latter's office on his invitation.

Told about the reprimand, Gonzalez said: "I'm ready to face anything. That is not in aid of legislation. There is no pending legislation with regards to the Manila Pen incident."

Gonzalez is seeking confirmation by the bicameral Commission on Appointments chaired by Villar.

Meanwhile, Senior State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco got into trouble for honoring the Senate summons to the inquiry.

"He (Velasco) was not supposed to be there. He was told not to be there. I'm not appearing, so what is he doing there?" Gonzalez said.

He also told reporters at the justice department that his nonappearance at yesterday's hearing did not mean that he would boycott subsequent hearings on the issue.

He said President Macapagal-Arroyo had not issued any instruction to that effect.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2007

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NEWS

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DAR 'hold' order angers Sumilao farmers

By Jerome Aning

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRARian Reform yesterday ordered San Miguel Foods Inc. (SMFI) to halt further development of the 144-hectare property in Sumilao, Bukidnon, being contested by local farmers pending resolution of the dispute.

"Respondent SMFI is hereby directed to refrain from further undertaking development activities other than those presently ongoing," Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser Pangandaman said in a two-page order.

The farmers, on the other hand, were told by Pangandaman to "respect SMFI's ownership and possession of the property."

In a statement, Pangandaman said his order was meant to keep the two parties from carrying out any activities that may be prejudicial to either side.

"With the issuance of this order, we hope the two contending parties would sit down and try to reach a mutually beneficial resolution," he said.

But at their encampment in front of the DAR building in Quezon City, the farmers—who had walked 1,700 kilometers over two months from Sumilao to press their claim—condemned the order.

"This is a big swindle, this is cruelty. It is very clear that what Secretary Pangandaman means by the status quo is for us not to insist on our claim to the land and for SMFI to continue with its work. He is protecting the interest of SMFI," said Napoleon Merida Jr., president of the San Vicente Landless Farmers Association and one of the marchers.

In a press conference, the farmers stood with their lawyers, some looking very angry, others teary-eyed and grim.

One farmer, Ramon Peñas, set fire to a copy of the order, saying, "This order is not ours, it's for San Miguel. "

An official of San Miguel Corp., parent company of SMFI, yesterday said the firm welcomed the DAR order.

The source, who requested anonymity because he was not authorized to speak, said: "We welcome the move because it recognizes San Miguel Foods' ownership of the property."

Merida said the farmers would go ahead with their march to Malacañang this morning where they will be joined by the Church-based organization, Simbahang Lingkod Bayan based at the Ateneo de Manila University. *(Related story on Page A1)*

The farmers maintain the property should be subjected to agrarian reform and returned to them after its former owner, Norberto Quisumbing Sr., failed to develop it according to plan.

"It was insulting to tell us to respect SMFI's ownership of the land. We cannot do that. The land had been awarded to us but was taken back because [Quisumbing] was allowed to convert it," Merida said. ***With Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson***

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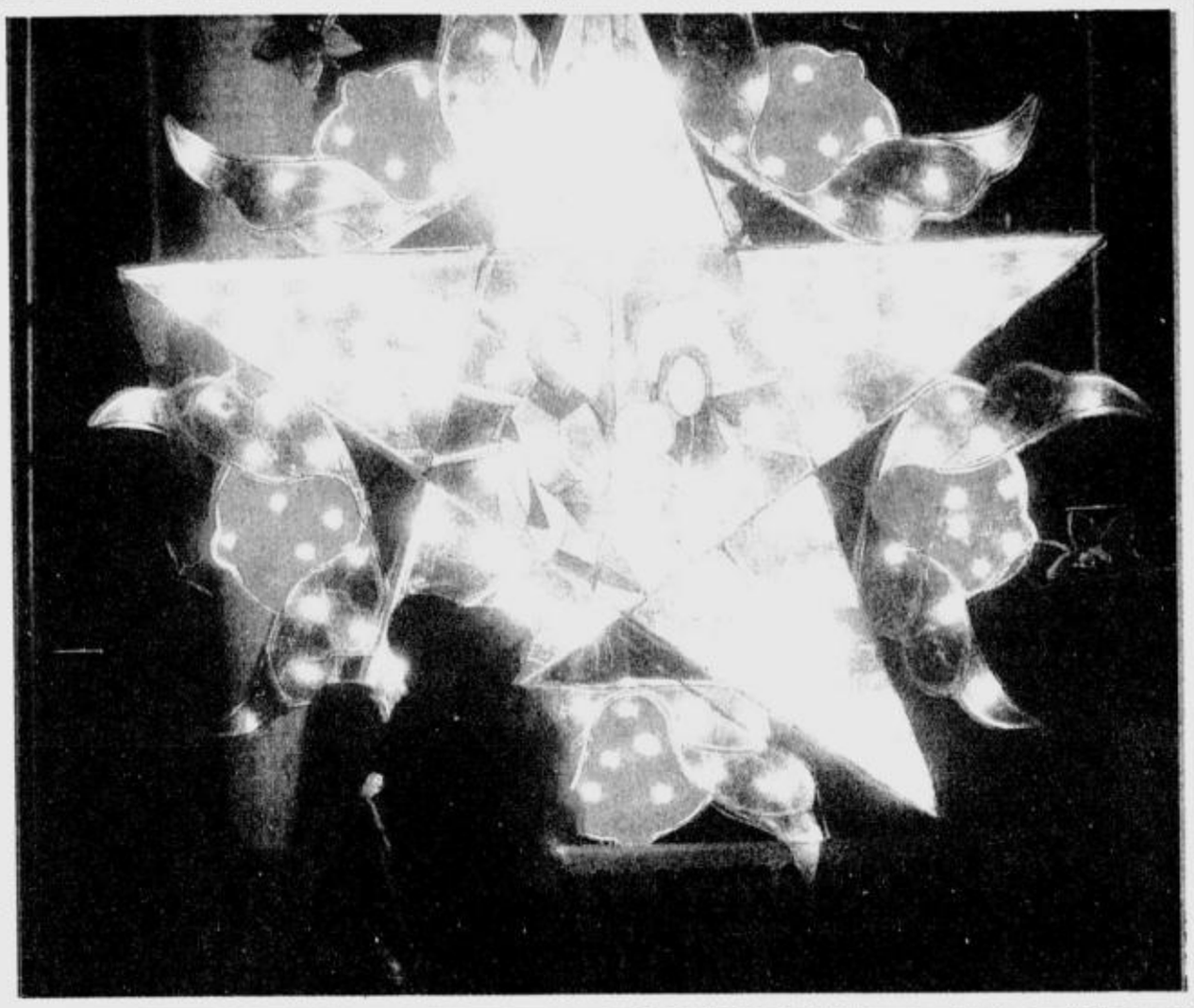
Pasig mayoral polls recount ordered



STARLIGHT, STAR BRIGHT
A family admires a giant Christmas lantern displayed at the Luneta Park along Roxas Boulevard in Manila.
RYAN LIM

Votes in city's 1,317 precincts questioned

By Kristine L. Alave

IT'S BEEN SEVEN MONTHS since the local elections, but the fight for the mayoralty in Pasig City is apparently still at full steam.

A recount of the votes in a total of 1,317 precincts in the city has been ordered by the Commission on Elections' Second Division, in response to the election protest filed by former Pasig Rep. Robert "Dudut" Jaworski Jr. a few months ago.

Jaworski had requested the Comelec to open and recount all the votes from the city's first district, which has 1,067 precincts.

His main rival, Robert Eusebio, the declared winner, had filed a counter-protest and sought a recount of the votes in in the second district. Eusebio had garnered 116,463 votes, and Jaworski, 107,141 votes.

The order issued by the Comelec's Second Division chaired by Commissioner Florentino Tuason Jr. directed the poll body's local division and the City Treasurer's Office to conduct an inventory and seal the ballot boxes in Pasig.

The document was dated Oct. 25, but the Pasig Comelec and the contending parties received their respective copies only in the last week of November.

The Second Division also ordered Jaworski and Eusebio to shell out P868,676 and P246,160, respectively, to defray the expenses for the revision of the ballots and incidental costs. They were likewise directed to shoulder the salaries of the canvassers.

There are about 240,000 registered voters in the second district, said Pasig Comelec chief Ma. Anne Gonzales.

Per the Comelec estimate of about 250 voters in each precinct, Eusebio may be looking at counting over 62,000 votes.

PASIG/ A26

Unpaid taxes put BIR building on auction block

By Jeannette I. Andrade

IT SEEMS EVEN THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue (BIR) can be remiss in paying taxes.

A BIR regional office building was among several government facilities, out of some 780 real estate units, included by the Quezon City government in yesterday's auction of properties with tax delinquencies.

Also included in the auction was the Light Rail Transit (LRT) line 2 that runs through Aurora Boulevard from Cubao, Quezon City to Sta. Mesa, Manila.

An appeal by a BIR lawyer prevented the sale of the four-story Region 7 office building on Quezon Avenue.

City Treasurer Victor Endriga, Jr. said he also received a call from Commissioner Lilian Hefti to exclude the property from the auction. "But I asked them to secure a temporary restraining order," he said.

The city treasurer said the BIR owed the local government P1.999 million in unpaid real estate taxes since 1981.

As for the LRT-2 line, he said the Light Rail Transit Authority (LRTA) owed the city more than P500 million in real estate taxes.

Only the government-sequestered Intercontinental Broadcasting Corporation (IBC-13) was sold for P5.8 million, but the sale excluded the building and equipment. IBC-13, he said, had unpaid real estate taxes amounting to P17 million.

A portion of the controversial Boracay mansion, a 1,953.04-square meter lot covered by land title TCT N-208116 in the name of St. Peter's Holdings and priced at P23.6 million, was excluded from the bidding, following an order of the Sandiganbayan.

During the auction, squatters from Barangay Kaligayahan, Novaliches and Barangay Damayang Lagi were able to buy the lots they occupied.

One dead, 4 injured in separate traffic incidents

By Julie M. Aurelio

A RETIRED SOLDIER WAS killed when he was hit by a speeding van late Wednesday night in Taguig City.

The victim was identified as Reverendo Acaac, 59, a former master sergeant of the Philippine Army and a resident of Paco, Manila.

In another incident, a driver and three others were injured late yesterday morning when a speeding passenger bus slammed into their van along the Coastal Road in Parañaque City.

PO2 Joel Adducul of the traffic enforcement unit identified the injured as driver Bernabe Badilla, Noel Trelles, Edgarda Trelles and Irene Cino. They were aboard a Nissan Urvan when the vehicle collided into a passenger bus.

Badilla's legs were trapped under the steering wheel, and the driver had to be pulled out by rescue workers.

Adducul said the driver and conductor of a Baes Express bus from Indang, Cavite, escaped. An initial investigation showed that at 10:45 a.m., the speeding bus lost its brakes and slammed into the van just before the Airport Road.

The Baclaran-bound van came from Bacoor, Cavite.

The accident caused a five-vehicle pileup resulting in heavy traffic on the Manila bound lane. Police said the passengers in the other vehicles were not injured.

The victims were rushed to the San Juan de Dios Hospital in Pasay City, where they remain under observation.

Adducul said, in their haste to escape, the bus' driver and conductor left the engine and television running.

In the Taguig incident, PO2 Eris Gaoaen said Acaac was crossing Lawton Avenue in Fort Bonifacio at 11:30 p.m. when it was hit by a speeding white Toyota Hi-Ace van.

The van driver, Elvis Paramil, is now facing charges of reckless imprudence resulting in homicide.

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Hold departure order vs Leviste lifted for Mecca trip

By DJ Yap

FORMER BATANGAS GOV. JOSE Antonio Leviste was allowed by a Makati court to go on a pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia next week.

The hold departure order issued against Leviste, who has been accused of killing his longtime aide Rafael de Las Alas, was temporarily lifted to enable him to travel from Dec. 16-22.

Judge Elmo Alameda of Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 150 noted Leviste's record of not being a flight risk and his obedience to the courts.

Addressing the judge, Leviste said he had no intention of running away, as evidenced by his voluntary surrender after confessing to shooting De Las Alas on Jan. 12. He has said he did it in self defense.

"The court is persuaded," Alameda said as he issued in open court an order granting Leviste's motion.

He also ordered Leviste to post a cash bond of P100,000, and sought his assurance that he would be present in the next hearing.

Leviste, a Muslim, said he was invited by Prince Al-Walid bin Talal bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia through the Saudi Ambassador to perform hajj with his daughter Marie Antoinette, also a Muslim.

The prosecution did not object to the motion.

Leviste was supposed to take the stand in today's hearing, which would have been the first time he would talk about what happened between him and De Las Alas on Jan. 12 inside his Makati office.

But it did not push through after Senior State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco moved to postpone it, saying he had been summoned by the Senate as a resource person on the Manila Peninsula takeover.

"I'm disappointed. For me, this would have meant the termination of this case," Leviste said.

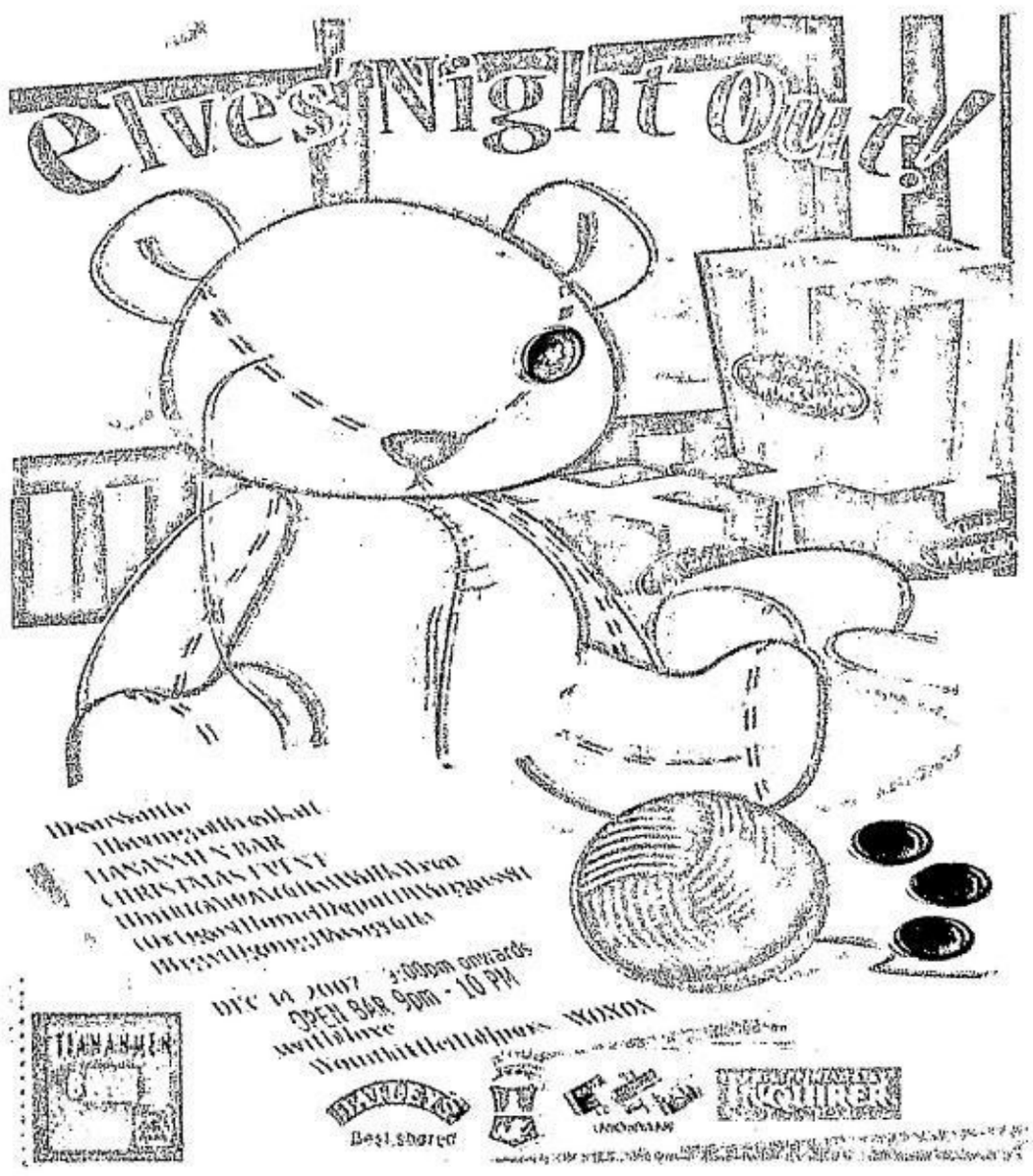
He said yesterday would have been the first time he would talk about what really happened on Jan. 12.

"I've never told anything about what happened to anyone," he said.

Leviste recalled talking to the family of De Las Alas, saying: "I addressed myself to the family of the deceased and I told them I would tell my story at the right time. I won't be dropping any bombshells."

His testimony was moved to Jan. 14 next year.

Man allegedly pushed out of bus dies from head injuries



By Nancy Carvajal

A YOUNG BUSINESSMAN DIED from head injuries after he was allegedly pushed out of a moving bus, causing him to fall on the pavement.

Authorities are now looking for the driver and conductor of a JMK bus.

The victim was identified as Felix de la Fuente, 30, of Nadurata Street, Maypajo, Caloocan City.

Caloocan City investigation division head Chief Insp. Jose Valencia reported to Northern Police District director Chief Supt. Pedro Tango that they were hampered in their effort to identify the suspects by the practice of having one franchise for several operators.

Valencia said the victim was declared dead on arrival by doctors of the Martinez hospital at around 1:30 a.m. on Oct. 26.

"An autopsy ... showed death was due to a traumatic head injury," Valencia said.

After getting in touch with the JMK bus line office in Malibay, Pasay City, Valencia said they were told that it was difficult to trace the bus driver and conductor because there were more than a hundred operators of JMK lines under the "*kabit*" system (one franchise, several operators).

An investigation showed the victim boarded an air-conditioned JMK bus with a UE-Letre sign at Edsa-Crossing at around 11 p.m. on Oct. 25.

Two witnesses said that around 12:30 a.m., when an orange bus stopped in front of their house on Samson Road in Caloocan City, they saw a man who was dragged out of the vehicle.

They said the man, who looked like the bus conductor, kicked the other guy out causing the victim to fall from the bus and hit his head on the pavement.

The bus immediately left, leaving the victim sprawled on the concrete pavement, unconscious, the witnesses said.

Valencia said the witnesses said the victim was holding some coins and two pieces of crumpled bus tickets bearing JMK Liner and marked P9 each, when they tried to help him sit up.

Also found in the victim's possession was his cellular phone. The witnesses used it to contact the victim's relatives after learning of his identity through the identification card in his wallet.

Valencia said investigators learned that, before the incident, the victim had a drinking session with a friend who was leaving for abroad.

The witnesses, including a friend who saw him board the bus, failed to note down the vehicle's plate number, because it was dark under the MRT station, Valencia said.

Pasig ...

From page A25

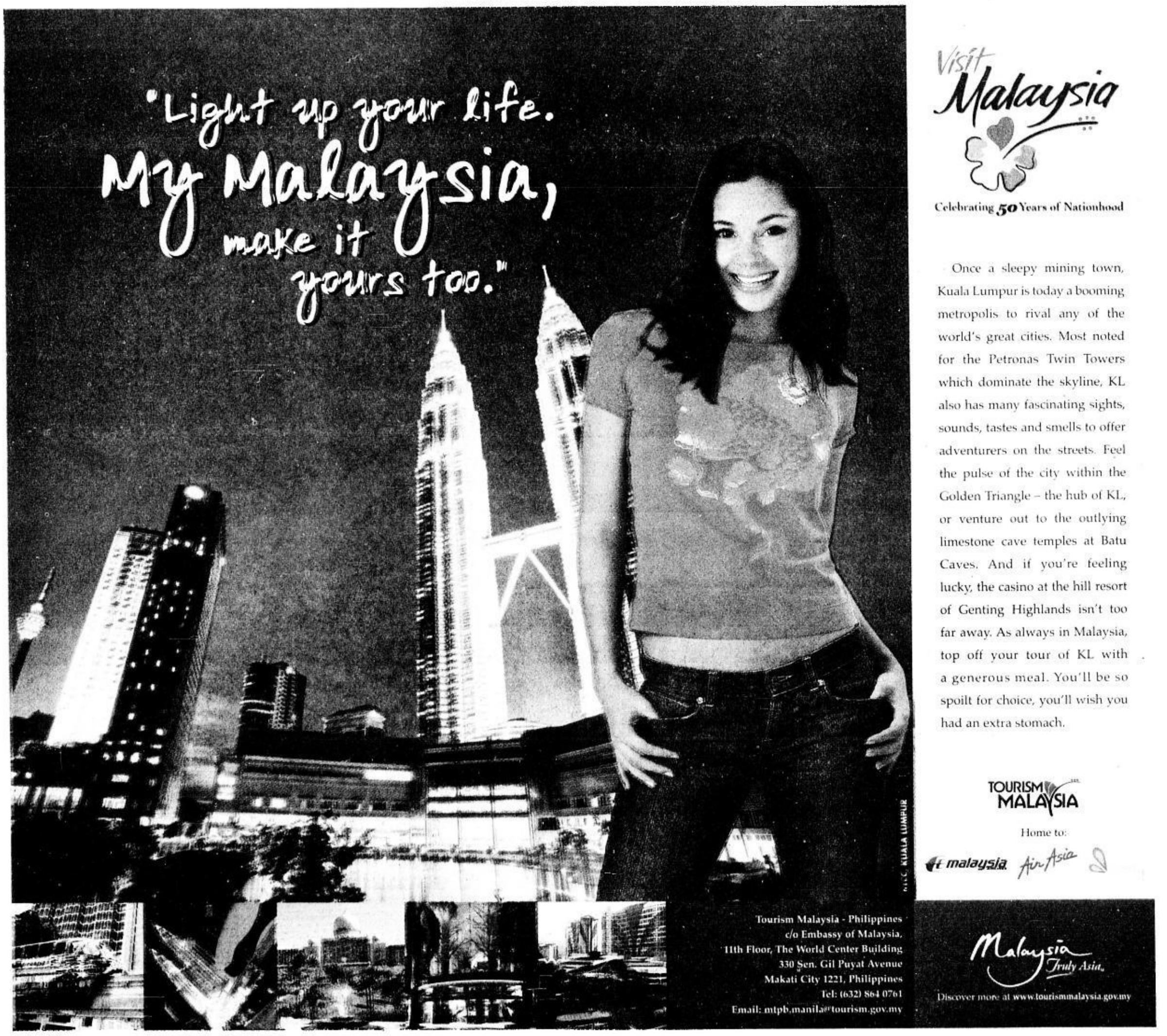
Gonzales said that according to the Second Division's order, an inventory of the ballot boxes—currently under guard by the City Treasurer—should be conducted next week.

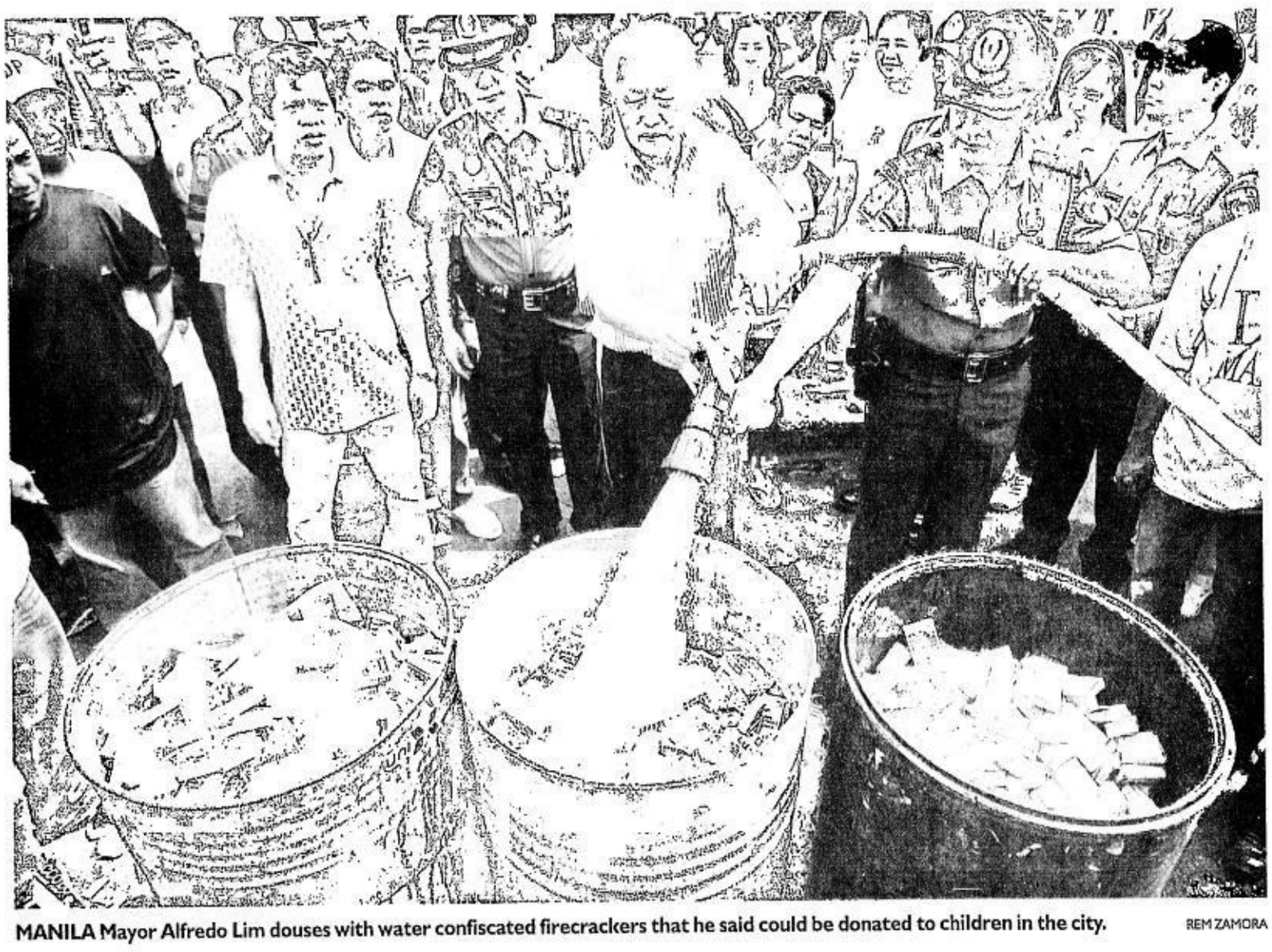
She added, however, that she and her staff preferred to conduct the inventory after the holidays because the designated area was being used as a distribution center of the city government's Paskong Handog program.

Jaworski's lawyer, Leila de Lima, said her client welcomed the Comelec order. "He is serious about this protest," which covers the populous barangays of Pinagbuhatan, Rosario and Manggahan, she said, adding: "These are the areas where the watchers encountered difficulties."

Eusebio's lawyer, Sixto Brillantes, voiced his client's confidence of prevailing in the recount. Brillantes said Eusebio—who had replaced his father Vicente as mayor—had a wide margin over Jaworski that would be difficult to surmount.

The fight over the mayoralty in Pasig was one of the closely watched contests in Metro Manila, with Eusebio and Jaworski trading allegations of vote-buying and document-tampering.





MANILA Mayor Alfredo Lim douses with water confiscated firecrackers that he said could be donated to children in the city. REM ZAMORA

Smuggled (harmless) firecrackers saved for Manila's street kids

By Allison W. Lopez

MANILA MAYOR ALFREDO Lim yesterday saved several boxes of smuggled harmless firecrackers for poor children to enjoy this holiday season.

After dousing with water from a firetruck hose a substantial portion of some P500,000 worth of "Pop Pop" and "Corsair Original Piccolo," the mayor hinted he would donate the remaining firecrackers to orphanages and street kids.

Decision

But the final decision on what to do with the firecrackers would have to come from Manila Regional Trial Court executive judge Reynaldo Ros, who ordered the destruction of the items, Lim said.

Around 86 boxes of the China-made items were seized recently from a warehouse on P. Sanchez Street, Sta. Mesa owned by a certain Anthony Zuang, alias Zhuran Zhuang, who remained at large.

Lim said the seized items were harmless. "Although these are imported and illegal, we'll see if we can give these to the children so they may enjoy these as they welcome the New Year," he said.

Evidence

Some boxes were also kept as evidence to be presented in court during the prosecution of the warehouse owner.

The mayor said the Manila Police District, headed by Chief Supt. Roberto Rosales, was on heightened alert for smuggling activities during the holiday season.

"This will serve as a lesson to all other persons who will import these banned merchandise. It doesn't pay to violate the law," he said.

NBI official charged with landgrabbing

By Tina G. Santos

AN OFFICIAL OF THE National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) is facing graft charges and a disbarment case for allegedly grabbing the land of a former confidential agent.

Lawyer Oscar Embido, NBI assistant regional director and chief of the bureau's Anti-Organized Crime Division, was charged with violation of RA 3019 or the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act and grave misconduct before the Office of the Ombudsman.

Embido is also facing a disbarment case before the Supreme Court's Office of the Bar Confidant.

The NBI official denied the landgrabbing charge and said he bought the property's sales patent from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

The cases stemmed from the complaint of Domingo Divina, 46, who said he worked for the respondent as an informant from 2001 to 2004.

Divina, who claimed he only finished third grade, said, "*Gusto ko lang mabigyan ako at ang aking pamilya ng katarungan* (My family only want justice).

In his complaint, Divina said he asked Embido's help to acquire a land title for a 296-square meter property in Purok 3, Zone 8, Cupang, Antipolo City that he inherited from his parents.

He said that before his mother Corazon died, she gave him documents, particularly the Deed of Assignment, Transfer and Waive of Right proving he had the rights over the property, including the house and the chapel built on it.

The complainant said that in August 2000, Embido asked him to sign a Waiver of Rights. Divina said he did not understand the document since it was written in English. He said the respondent did not also bother to explain the document to him.

Trusting the respondent, the complainant said he immediately signed the paper and gave him all the original documents.

Transfer

Three years later, the complainant said they were forced to leave the property as the respondent allegedly claimed the title had been transferred to his name.

"*Wala kaming nagawa sa mga sandaling yon kaya napilitan kaming lumisan sa aming lupa dahil wala kaming pinag-aralan at sa labis naming pagkatakot sa kanya* (We couldn't do anything because we didn't know any better and because we were afraid of him)," Divina said in his affidavit.

Embido admitted that the complainant, who used to be his "asset," asked for his help to acquire a land title.

"But he (Divina) said he had no money for the process, so he asked me to just pay him, then I could have the property. I had already given him so much money, even more than the actual value of the lot," Embido said, adding he was ready to answer the charges.

Fire destroys house in Parañaque subdivision

By Julie M. Aurelio

IN JUST 32 MINUTES, A BLAZE of unknown origin destroyed a house and four door sedan in a posh subdivision in Parañaque City on Wednesday night.

The fire occurred at around 10:15 p.m. on 45 Gonzales Street, Sinag Tala Subdivision in Barangay BF Homes at a one-story house owned by Jaime Roxas.

While no one was injured in the brief fire, arson investigators estimated the damage to be at least P2.5 million.

Case investigator SFO2 Felipe Caguing said the blaze began at a room on the right portion of the house, eventually reaching the first alarm at 10:20 p.m. Four firetrucks from the Parañaque City fire department and 15 volunteer firetrucks immediately responded to the scene.

The blaze completely destroyed the house, as well as a Toyota Camry model 2000 parked inside the garage.

Authorities declared the fire that reached the third alarm around 10:35 p.m., under control at 10:47 p.m.

Under probe

Caguing said the the cause of the blaze is still under investigation.

Arson investigators added that there were no reported injuries or casualties in the incident.

Muntinlupa may sue factories responsible for oil spill in city

By Julie M. Aurelio

THE MUNTINLUPA GOVERNMENT is determined to go after two factories responsible for an oil spill even if they are not under the city's jurisdiction.

Mayor Aldrin San Pedro said the city might sue the factories for the damage caused by the bunker oil they dumped that affected its river.

The factories reportedly responsible for a second oil spill in the city were Alaska Milk and the Universal Robina factories.

"Those factories operate in San Pedro, Laguna, so we cannot issue a closure order against them," the mayor said. "But the Tunasan-Cuyab River is within our boundaries, we are the ones affected."

San Pedro denied earlier reports that the two factories were operating in a compound at Barangay Tunasan.

The mayor said he had urged the Laguna Lake Development Authority and the Philippine Coast Guard to hasten its investigation of the oil spill that caused harm to Laguna de Bay.

He said that once the agencies have come up with concrete findings, "we might sue the two factories for the damage caused by the bunker oil they dumped."

On Sunday, the city government and the LLDA discovered another oil leak at a creek at Villa Carolina I Subdivision in Barangay Tunasan.

PCG personnel were able to collect at least 20 drums of foul-smelling bunker oil and waste water from the creek that flowed into the Tunasan-Cuyab River, a tributary of the Laguna de Bay.

San Pedro said the city government and the PCG used boom spills, a foam-like device that absorbs oil, to contain the spill and prevent it from spreading to the lake.

He added that he was coordinating with Mayor Calixto Cataquiz of San Pedro, Laguna on the problem.

"I am hopeful that Cataquiz will at least consider closing down the companies if they are found to be at fault," San Pedro said.

He added that the Muntinlupa city council would pass a resolution asking the LLDA and the PCG to impose "stricter, drastic measures" against Universal Robina and Alaska Milk once the report is final.

"We can only create noise about the oil spill issue. After all, we have no authority over the erring companies. It's not within our power to close them down," San Pedro said.

QCPD restricts media access to offices

By Jeannette I. Andrade

ADVERSE TRAVEL ADVISORIES issued by foreign governments in the country drove the Quezon City Police District (QCPD) to send a gag directive to all its personnel who deal with members of the media.

The memorandum dated Dec. 12 and signed by QCPD District Intelligence Division (DID) director Supt. Bernabe Balba, as directed by Senior Supt. Magtanggol Gatdula, also sought to restrict reporters from "access to sensitive offices."

But Balba told the INQUIRER that the order was not intended to fully bar members of the media from the right to information, but to ensure that only factual information is disseminated to the public.

The memo, it was learned, emanated from another memorandum National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) chief Director Geary Barrias issued on Dec. 6 with the subject "Guidelines to Protect Classified Information and Unauthorized Disclosure to the Media."

It read in part: "This pertains to numerous incidents of uncoordinated and unauthorized disclosure of classified information coming from the lower units of the PNP regarding the plans and activities of threat groups/ terrorist groups in the country."

The memo also ordered all police personnel to "tactfully" turn down queries pertaining to terrorism and other security-related matters and to refer media persons to the antiterrorism council of the National Security Adviser.

To discourage members of the media from wandering off to "sensitive offices," Balba instructed personnel to designate a lounge where reporters, photographers, and crew members would be restricted. He did not, however, explain what he meant by "sensitive offices."

METROBRIEFS

Trader robbed of P300,000

A BUSINESSMAN lost P300,000 in cash he just withdrew from a bank to five mortorcycle-riding robbers in the middle of a traffic gridlock yesterday morning in Quezon City. Jose Pameloza, 52, of Banlat, Tandang Sora, who was driving a Toyota Corolla (WGA-325), got stuck in traffic at around 10 a.m. at the corner of Araneta Avenue and Palanza Street, Barangay Doña Imelda in New Manila when five armed men alighted from two black motorcycles and approached his car from both sides. SPO2 Ronaldo Correa of the Quezon City Police District (QCPD) Galas Station 11 said that Pameloza had no other recourse but to give up the money he just withdrew from the Metrobank Sta. Mesa branch since pistols were aimed at him from both sides of his car. Correa said the victim handed over the cash that was inside an envelope to the robbers who quickly boarded their motorcycles and fled immediately. The police officer said the suspects could have trailed the victim from the bank and took advantage of the traffic bottleneck to pull the heist. QCPD Station 11 operatives have fanned out to conduct follow-up operations against the suspects. ***Jeannette I. Andrade***

'Hot meat' seized in Divisoria

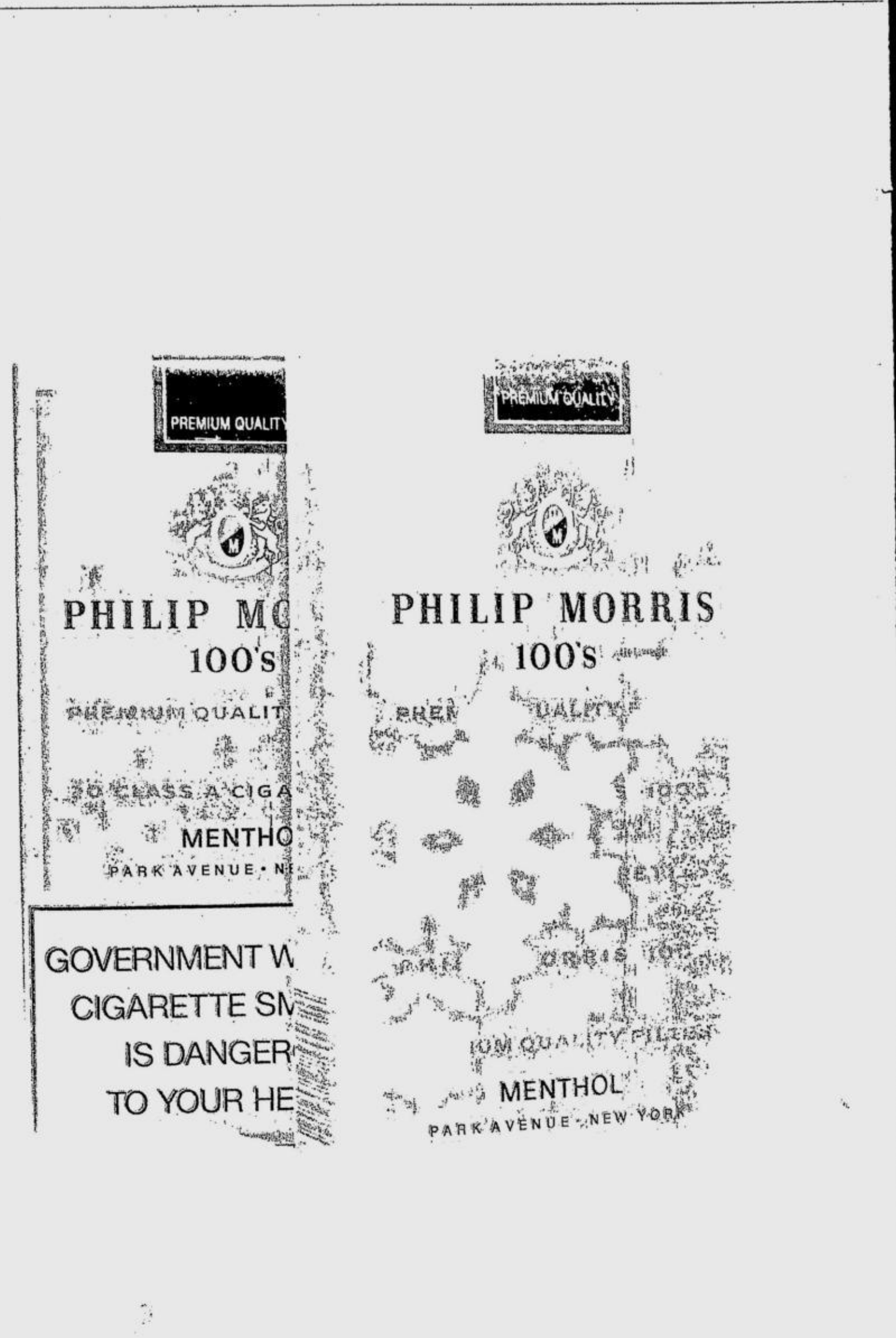
AT LEAST 400 kilos of "double-dead" or "hot" meat were seized at Manila's Divisoria Market early yesterday morning as Mayor Alfredo Lim ordered an intensified campaign against "hot meat" sold in public markets especially during the holidays. "We are strictly enforcing all ordinances and laws that prohibit the entry and sale of hot meat deemed unfit for human consumption in Manila. Violators will face the full force of the law," warned Lim. Operatives of the Veterinary Inspection Board (VIB), headed by City Administrator Jesus Mari Marzan, raided the Divisoria Market in Binondo and found some 400 kilos of double-dead meat about to be sold to unsuspecting consumers. VIB meat inspectors, Marzan said, have been deployed in all city markets to check if the food products being peddled were fit for consumption. The mayor also ordered the city's veterinary personnel to closely monitor the flow of meat products invading the markets this Christmas season to ensure consumer safety. The confiscated meat was later discarded in a deep ditch inside the VIB compound. ***Allison W. Lopez***

Two men nabbed for estafa

TWO PERSONS accused of estafa, including a Korean national, were arrested in Pasig City in separate operations yesterday, police reported. One suspect, identified as Christopher Ian Gadiaza, 28, was arrested after a priest complained to the police that he was swindled. According to SPO1 Geminer Tingne, Fr. Gilbert Talaqbong, said Gadiaza and his friend, Ramil Rodriguez, both employees of AIM Global Marketing Inc. in Pasig City's Ortigas Business District, convinced him to invest P350,000 in a networking scheme. The two allegedly told Talaqbong that he would receive P100,000 after 42 days. But the money was not given to him as promised, prompting the priest to go to the police, who arrested Gadiaza in his office on Wednesday night. Rodriguez remains at large. In a separate operation, a Korean national suspected of being an illegal recruiter was nabbed yesterday at the Metrowalk Shopping Center in Pasig City. Tingne identified the suspect as James Yu alias Kim Hyoun Soon, who was arrested by a virtue of an arrest warrant issued by a Manila court in 2002. Tingne said the suspect was arrested by the police around 1:20 a.m. in a restaurant at the shopping center. Tingne said Yu was also accused of four counts of estafa. Both Gadiaza and Yu are now detained at the Eastern Police District jail. ***Kristine L. Alave***

Villar guest at club anniversary

SENATE President Manuel Villar will be the guest of honor and speaker when the Natives of Borongan in the City of Manila and Suburbs (Nobitcoms) Inc. marks its 84th anniversary tonight at the Kowloon Restaurant on West Avenue in Quezon City. Villar will also induct the group's new set of officers led by Maximo C. Aljibe, president and Judge Leandro Catalo, vice-president. Past presidents of the association will also be honored in the affair that starts at 7 p.m.



China takes US to task on currency, food safety

XIANGHE, CHINA—AN ASsertive China fended off US pressure over currency policy and food safety on Wednesday and told Washington to put its own house in order rather than blame Beijing for its economic problems.

The jousting, during a high-level "strategic economic dialogue" near Beijing, underscored the growing complexity of a relationship that US Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson said was now central to maintaining global economic prosperity.

Paulson, who called the first of two days of talks "lively but friendly," urged China to let its currency rise faster to curb inflation, now at an 11-year high of 6.9 percent.

"China's leaders have voiced concerns about China's macroeconomic stability, in particular mounting inflation, growing asset bubbles and possible overheating. A more flexible exchange rate policy is especially important to China now, given these risks," Paulson said.

China's central bank let the yuan rise as high as 7.3647 per dollar on Wednesday, the strongest level since the currency was unpegged from the dollar in July 2005. The yuan has gained 12.4 percent against the dollar in total since then.

Vice Commerce Minister Chen Deming dug in his heels against a faster rise, saying China's economy could not afford it.

Turning the tables on the United States, Chen criticized the recent decline in the dollar, which he said was pushing up oil and other resource prices and eroding the value of US assets held by countries such as China.

"What I'm worrying about now is the weakening dollar and its potential impact on global growth," Chen said.

Central bank chief Zhou Xiaochuan also spoke out for a strong dollar and said he was concerned that loose US monetary policy could flood the global economy with cash and buffet China's markets in the process.

The news appearances by Chen, Zhou and others appeared to be an attempt by Beijing to win the battle of public opinion.

High-ranking Chinese officials usually keep a lower profile at such conferences.

Vice Premier Wu Yi, known as China's "Iron Lady," also came out swinging. With several bills wending their way through the US, Congress aimed at getting Beijing to speed up the yuan's rise, she warned Paulson that business ties would be severely undermined if the measures became law.

"Obviously, to resort to trade protectionism and blame another country for the structural problems in the US economy is the wrong approach which would only harm the interest of the US itself," Wu said.

The talks began on a prickly note after Washington, alarmed by a string of recalls of toys and other China-made goods, put the safety of food and other imports at the top of the agenda.

"I need to point out frankly that the United States should also assume its due share of responsibility for improving product quality and food safety," Wu said as the delegations faced one another in a tightly guarded government resort outside Beijing.

She accused US interest groups of stirring up trouble and said: "We must oppose attempts to politicize trade issues."

Paulson said he was worried about a rise in economic nationalism and protectionist sentiment in both countries.

"Neither China nor the United States can protect our way to further prosperity. We must resist attempts to reduce transparency or increase regulatory obstacles in order to protect domestic industries," he said in his opening remarks.

Trade tensions were on the boil and both countries needed to take action: "Whereas trade was once largely a source of stability in US-China relations, it has recently become a source of tension, and not only because of safety concerns."

China's surging inflation rate prompted Paulson to make the case that a stronger currency was in China's own interest because it would reduce import costs and let the central bank raise interest rates more freely.

Instead, with the yuan on a tight leash, China was "missing a tool" for managing economic affairs.

"I made the point that monetary policy can be an effective tool and monetary policy can be more effective if there's a currency that is more reflective of underlying fundamentals," Paulson later told a small group of reporters.

"China has sped up the rate of appreciation over the past year and there is no evidence this has harmed them," he added.

China's economy grew 11.5 percent in the first three quarters of the year, the fastest pace in more than a decade. *Reuters*

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PALESTINIAN carpenter Tawfiq Salsaa displays a wooden nativity scene in his workshop in Bethlehem Dec. 10. REUTERS

3 wise men hit a barrier in Bethlehem

By Rebecca Harrison

BETHLEHEM, WEST BANK—TAWFIQ SALsaa's olive wood nativity scene looks like thousands of others sold to pilgrims in Bethlehem at Christmas. Except in his version, a wall separates the baby Jesus from the three wise men.

"I wanted to give the world an idea of how we live in the Holy Land," the 65-year-old Palestinian carpenter said in his workshop, his sweater speckled with sawdust.

"I was inspired by our own wall."

Salsaa has sold almost 400 of his hand-carved nativity scenes caricaturing Israel's West Bank barrier—a hated symbol of occupation for Palestinians. They have gone to churches and individuals through a British-based charity and advocacy group.

With his carvings, Salsaa aims to chip away at a sentimental image of Bethlehem portrayed in Christmas cards and carols worldwide to show the hardships faced by Palestinians today in the town revered as the birthplace of Jesus 2,000 years ago.

Modern Bethlehem is encircled by checkpoints and Israeli walls and fences built on Arab land on a line that Palestinians say obstructs the possibility of them establishing a viable state and stifles the economy. Israel says it needs the barrier to keep suicide bombers out of its cities.

Tourism to Bethlehem, a mixed Muslim and Christian town, virtually dried up during the second Palestinian uprising, which started in 2000. It is slowly recovering, but residents say intimidating Israeli security doesn't help.

Visitors to Bethlehem—the West Bank's top tourist attraction—must clear military security before passing through the barrier. A sign reading "Peace Be With You" hangs from a high concrete wall next to an army watchtower.

Tony Blair, the former British prime minister who is now the international envoy to the Palestinians, spent the night in a hotel in Bethlehem on Tuesday as part of his effort to encourage Western tourists to stay in the city.

Noting the Bible story of Mary and Joseph's flight from Bethlehem with their infant son, Salsaa said: "I was thinking about how Jesus escaped from here 2,000 years ago.

"It wouldn't be so easy now."

British NGO Amos Trust said it was selling the nativity scenes online as part of a broader campaign that includes publishing alternative Christmas carols such as "At the Army Checkpoint" to the tune of "In the Bleak Mid Winter."

"We don't want anyone singing 'O Little Town of Bethlehem' this Christmas without people realizing what's happening there," Garth Hewitt, director of the Amos Trust, told Reuters.

And what if Palestinian and Israeli negotiators manage to broker a deal on peace? Salsaa has made his "barrier" detachable. *Reuters*

3 car bombs strike southern Iraqi city, killing at least 41

BAGHDAD—THREE CAR BOMBS exploded in quick succession Wednesday at the main market of a southern Shiite city, killing at least 41 people and wounding 150 others, police and local government officials said. It was the deadliest attack against Iraqi civilians in four months.

The devastating blasts in Amarah, an oil-producing city largely spared from sectarian bloodshed, occurred only days before Britain was expected to hand over a neighboring southern province—the last remaining under British control since the 2003 invasion.

Fears are rising about whether Iraq's mostly Shiite security forces can control Shiite militias that are competing for power in the oil-rich south, even as US officials report dramatic falls in violence nationwide.

American commanders fear that al-Qaida and other extremists might try to exploit the security gap by attempting spectacular attacks against Shiite civilians in less-protected areas outside Baghdad—especially where there is little coalition military presence.

No group claimed responsibility for the Amarah bombings, which occurred minutes apart at the entrance to the main market in the city, 320 kilometers (200 miles) southeast of Baghdad.

Bystanders rushed to help victims of the first blast, only to suffer death or injury in the explosions that followed, police and witnesses said.

Car bombs are the are a signature weapon of al-Qaida and other Sunni extremists, which are seeking new sanctuaries after being driven out of the Baghdad area.

But such groups have had virtually no presence in Amarah and the surrounding Maysan province, where there are few Sunni communities to offer them shelter.

Instead, rival Shiite militias, some believe backed by Iran, pose the biggest security threat in the south. That threat has drawn new attention since Britain announced plans to draw down on its military presence in the south.

British forces handed control of Maysan to the Iraqis last April.

In a few days, Britain is expected to turn over the last southern province—oil-rich Basra, long rocked by militia turf battles. Maintaining security in Basra, the focal point of Iraq's vast oil wealth, represents a major test for Iraqi security forces, which have been infiltrated by Shiite militias.

Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, who was visiting nearby Basra to discuss reconstruction issues, called the Amarah attack a "desperate attempt" to draw attention away from "the clear successes" in the battle to restore stability.

Al-Maliki, a Shiite, urged the people of Amarah to exercise restraint and avoid revenge attacks against the "terrorists who do not want Iraq to stand up again." *AP*

UNDATED photo released by Tokyo University's Department of Biophysics and Biochemistry Graduate School of Science, shows a genetically modified mouse staying near a cat. Scientists at the university say they have successfully switched off the rodents' instinct to cower at the smell or presence of cats. AP

Scientists create genetically modified 'fearless' mouse

TOKYO—CAT AND MOUSE may never be the same.

The age-old animosity between cats and mice could be a thing of the past with genetically modified mice that Japanese scientists say show no fear of felines, a development that may shed new light on mammal behavior and the nature of fear itself.

Scientists at Tokyo University say they have used genetic engineering to successfully switch off a mouse's instinct to cower at the smell or presence of cats—showing that fear is genetically hardwired and not learned through experience, as commonly believed.

"Mice are naturally terrified of cats, and usually panic or flee at the smell of one. But mice with certain nasal cells removed through genetic engineering didn't display any fear," said research team leader Ko Kobayakawa.

In his experiment, the genetically altered mice approached cats, even snuggled up to them and played with them.

Of course, that's not necessarily good for a mouse's health. Kobayakawa said he chose domesticated cats that were docile and thus less likely to do what a cat normally would be expected to do when presented with a friendly mouse—pounce.

The mutant mice showed other changes as well.

According to a university press release on the findings, which were published in the science journal Nature, they stopped avoiding spoiled food, another sign that their fear response had been diminished.

To determine fear levels, Kobayakawa's team measured the stress-invoked activity in the brains of the mice, which produces certain hormones in the blood, and found it to be lower than expected.

Separate tests showed that mutant mice could still be taught to fear cats by exposing them to a feline odor and then inflicting pain, according to the release.

"The discovery that fear is genetically determined and not learned after birth is very interesting, and goes against what was previously thought," he said.

The research may have practical applications in the future.

Kobayakawa said his findings, published in Nature last month, suggest human aversion to dangerous smells like that of rotten food could also be genetically predetermined. He said the research could be used to develop treatment for fear-related neural diseases, such as anxiety disorders, phobias, obsessive-compulsive disorder and other fear-related diseases.

Kobayakawa said he hoped to study reactions associated with positive smells as well, such as the odor of good food. *AP*

Researchers discover why the pregnant don't tip over

PREGNANT WOMEN DO NOT tip over, and researchers say an evolutionary curve has a lot to do with the reason why.

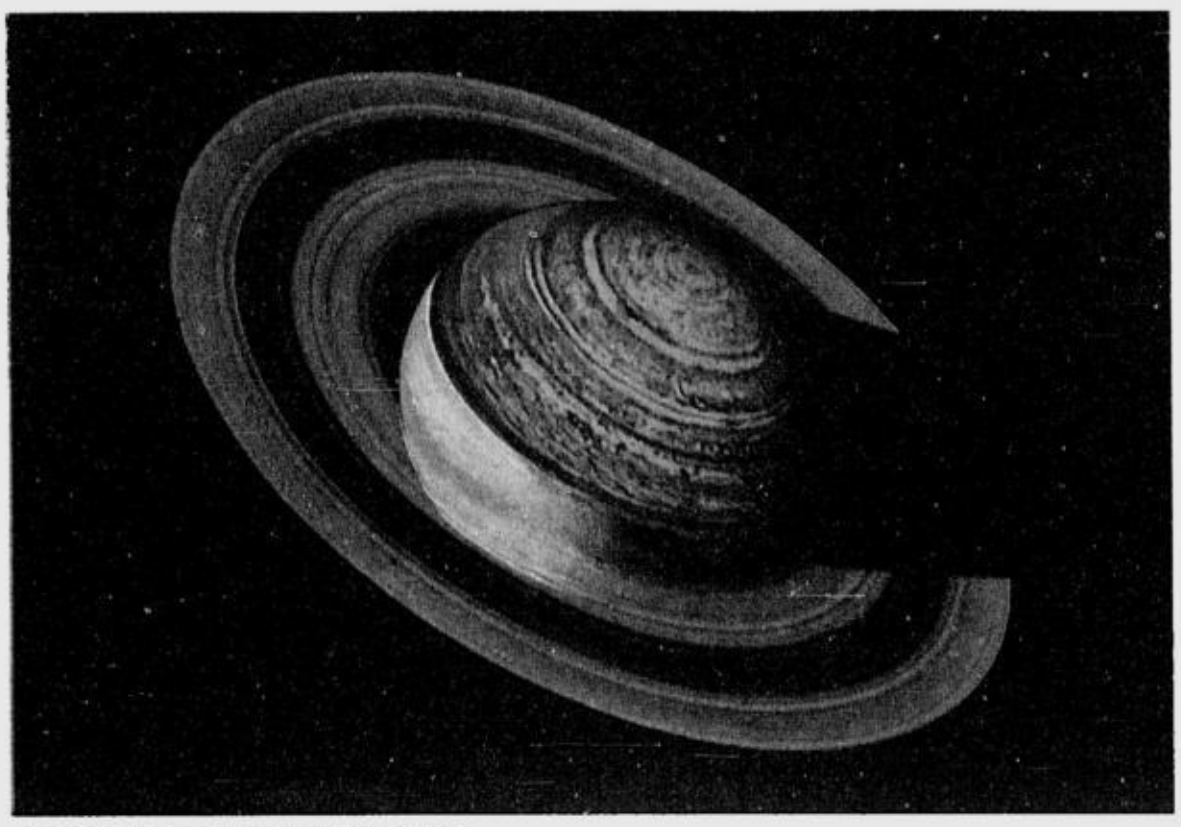
Anthropologists studying the human spine have found that women's lower vertebrae evolved in ways that reduce back pressure during pregnancy, when the mass of the abdomen grows by nearly one-third and the center of mass shifts forward considerably. That increases pressure on the spinal column, strains the muscles and generally reduces stability.

Even without the benefit of advanced study in biomechanics, women tend to deal with the shift—and avoid tumbling over like a bowling pin—by leaning back. But the solution to one problem creates another, since it puts even more pressure on the spine and muscles.

And that, report researchers from Harvard University and the University of Texas in the current issue of the journal Nature, is where evolution enters the story.

The lower spine in humans had already developed a unique forward curve that helps compensate for the extra pressures that arose when the primate ancestors went from moving around on four limbs to walking upright. Researchers looked for an additional mechanism that might have compensated for the increased strain of pregnancy as well.

What they found, said Katherine K. Whitcome, a postdoctoral fellow at Harvard and the lead author of the paper, was evidence that evolution had produced a stronger and more flexible lower spine for women. After studying 19 pregnant subjects, Whitcome found that the lumbar, or lower back, curve in women extends across three vertebrae, as opposed to two in men. And the connecting points between vertebrae are relatively larger in women, and shaped differently in ways that make the stack more stable and less prone to the bones shifting out of alignment or breaking. *NYT*



AS OLD AS THE SOLAR SYSTEM
Image provided by Nasa on May 31, was taken as the Cassini spacecraft flew over the unlit side of Saturn, capturing Saturn's glow. Saturn's shimmering rings may be as old as the solar system, scientists said Dec. 12, debunking earlier theories that the rings were formed during the dinosaur age. AP

Rape turns Australia's attention to plight of Aborigines

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA—MOUNTING anger over the handling of the gang rape of a 10-year-old indigenous girl has pushed the plight of Australia's Aboriginal minority to the top of the country's political agenda, leaving the new government of Prime Minister Kevin Rudd scrambling for solutions to one of the country's most intractable problems.

The case has provoked accusations in the news media that there is one law for white Australians and another for Aborigines.

On Wednesday, the newly appointed federal minister for indigenous affairs, Jenny Macklin, suggested that the federal government might consider intervening in Queensland State, where the crime took place, in the same way the federal government did in Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory this year amid concerns about child abuse. Macklin said she wanted to discuss possible approaches with Anna Bligh, the premier of Queensland.

"It would be very helpful for the two of us to get together as soon as possible to discuss what we have learned from the Northern Territory intervention and what issues might be useful to be implemented in Queensland," Macklin told the Australian Broadcasting Corp.

The rape of the 10-year-old girl, whose name has not been made public, took place in April 2006 in Aurukun, on Cape York, on Australia's northeastern tip. Nine male Aborigines pleaded guilty, but none have been sent to prison. The three older defendants—ages 17, 18 and 26 at the time of the crime—were given six-month suspended sentences last month. The younger six, whose ages were not made public, were put on probation for 12 months in October. Noel Pearson, a resident of Cape York and a prominent Aboriginal leader, said he believed that chronic leniency toward offenders had contributed to social breakdown and to the abuse and neglect of children. "This is the tip of a tragic iceberg. It is a problem that has been going on for a long time. It is a problem we have been trying to highlight for a long time," he told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

The case has forced non-Aboriginal Australians to re-examine their relationship with the continent's original inhabitants. It has given extra impetus to discussions about whether the new government should issue a formal apology for past injustices like the "stolen generation," Aboriginal children who were taken from their parents, a practice that ended less than 40 years ago. *NYT*

Carter says US human rights practices an 'embarrassment'

ATLANTA—FORMER PRESIDENT Jimmy Carter said that current US human rights practices are an "embarrassment" and are far from policies he put in place as president to make human rights a priority for US foreign policy.

Carter said US detention centers in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba and in Iraq may one day have infamy as historic places where human rights were abused such as in Argentina, Chile, Poland, South Africa and the former Soviet Union.

"This is an embarrassment to the people in my country to know that my own nation's government now disavows the principles that were in the forefront of the world's consciousness in the late 1970s," said Carter, who was speaking Wednesday evening at The Carter Center during a discussion of civil rights in the former Soviet Union and the United States.

"We have a very serious problem here," the former president said.

Carter said that during his presidency, the objective of the US government was to reduce torture, arbitrary arrest and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of prisoners. But he said that has changed in the United States because of the country's war on terror.

"We know that prisoners are incarcerated now under the control of the United States without any charges made against them—for years and years. The administration and Congress have become immune to the tragedy of human rights violations under the aegis of security," Carter said. *AP*

FAKE FAUN
"The Faun," a half-man, half-goat ceramic figure supposedly sculpted by 19th century French artist Paul Gauguin that has delighted museum visitors in Chicago for a decade. The museum said Dec. 11 that the sculpture is a fake and that it is among scores of forgeries produced by the Greenhalgh family. AP

Led by the military, war-weary US awakens to 'soft power'

By Jim Mannion

WASHINGTON—AFTER SIX hard years of war, the United States is awakening to the idea that "soft power" is a better way to regain influence and clout in a world bubbling with instability.

And nowhere is the change in thinking more advanced than in the US military, which is pushing for greater diplomacy, economic aid, civic action and civilian capabilities to prevent new wars and win the peace in Iraq and Afghanistan.

US Defense Secretary Robert Gates caught the spirit in a much praised speech at Kansas State University last month, calling for a dramatic increase in spending on civilian instruments of power.

Such an appeal would have been unthinkable not long ago, as Gates himself acknowledged, saying it was a "man bites dog" story.

"I think having stubbed our toe badly on Iraq, people are realizing that we weren't doing that well, and it's time for a change," said Joseph Nye, a Harvard professor and former senior Pentagon official.

Nye popularized the term "soft power" in books and essays which argue that a key source of US clout is its ability to attract friends and allies by investing in the international good.

"Since 9/11, the United States has been exporting fear and anger rather than the more traditional values of hope and optimism," a report by a commission Nye cochaired with Richard Armitage, the former deputy secretary of state, warned last month. As a result, it said, "Suspicions of American power have run deep."

The United States needs to pursue a positive vision that goes beyond the war on terrorism, it said.

The response of the Bush administration has been "a mixed bag," Nye said.

"But I do think that the view that we have not had smart power in terms of combining the various instruments we have, that we have underinvested in soft power, is represented in the Gates' remarks," he said.

Gates pointed to the huge disparity between the Pentagon's half trillion dollar budget and the state department $37 billion.

Its 6,600 diplomats amount to the crew of a single US aircraft carrier, he said.

The US Agency for International Development has been slashed from 15,000 to 3,000 people, and the US Information Agency was dismantled, he said.

Underfunded and undermanned, US civilian agencies have not kept up with the demand for experts in war zones, leading to bitter complaints from US military officers that they have been left holding the bag. *AFP*

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Bomb kills top Lebanon general

BEIRUT, LEBANON—A POWERFUL CAR BOMB KILLED ONE OF Lebanon's top generals and his bodyguard in a suburb of Beirut on Wednesday, striking an unexpected blow at the country's most widely respected institution and further undermining Lebanon's precarious stability.

The army officer, Brig. Gen. Francois al-Hajj, was killed when a bomb under a parked blue BMW sedan exploded as he drove past on his way to work at the defense ministry.

Hajj, 54, was a top contender to succeed Gen. Michel Suleiman, the army chief who is poised to become the country's next president. He was also the operational commander during the three-month battle over the summer against Islamic militants holed up in a Palestinian refugee camp in northern Lebanon.

HAJJ AFP

Whether it was intended as a political message or as revenge, the blast underscored the persistence of the bitter political confrontation that has crippled the government during the past year. The crisis has deepened since Nov. 23, when Emile Lahoud stepped down at the end of his term as president without any agreement on a successor.

A solution seemed possible two weeks ago when the major political groups agreed to support Suleiman as president. But since then political negotiations have foundered, with leaders disagreeing over procedure and the makeup of the next government.

If the lawmakers do not elect Suleiman by the end of the year, they may be forced to wait until mid-March. Lebanese law limits the calendar sessions for amending the constitution—a necessary first step before an army chief can be allowed to become president.

The army, which splintered during the 15-year civil war, has in recent years been viewed as the one neutral institution in a country whose leaders are deeply divided over ideology, foreign patrons and their share of power.

The explosion, which also wounded six people, took place about 7 a.m. on a mountainous road that the general regularly took to work.

Some leading anti-Syrian politicians blamed Damascus for the killing, as they have for a series of political assassinations during the past three years. They pointed to comments made Tuesday by the Syrian vice president, Farouq Sharaa, who said that Syria's friends in Lebanon were stronger than ever and that "no one in Lebanon, even with foreign support, can win the battle against Syria."

Syria has denied any role in previous assassinations in Lebanon, and on Wednesday the Syrian foreign minister, Walid al-Moualem, denounced the "criminal attack" on Hajj. *NYT*

Binangonan Catholic College Celebrates 60th Foundation Anniversary

BINANGONAN CATHOLIC COLLEGE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION 60th Year Celebration

THE BINANGONAN CATHOLIC COLLEGE (formerly Binangonan Catholic High School) is celebrating its 60th Foundation Anniversary, with a testimonial dinner to be held on December 14 at the college covered court.

Invited guests and participants will include the College alumni, faculty, employees, staff and stakeholders.

The highlight of the affair is the Awarding Ceremonies for the BCC Outstanding Alumni. Recipients include medical practitioner **Dr. Ildefonso Alvarez** (Batch 1975-1976); Civil Aeronautics Board Executive Director **Atty. Carmelo L. Arcilla** (1969-1970); Sociologist and Professorial Lecturer of UST **Prof. Clarence M. Batan** (1990-1991), who is now in a scholarship grant at Dalhousie University in Canada; **Retired Col. Melencio A. Cerda** (1966-1967); Division School Superintendent of Rizal **Dr. Edith Doblada** (1958-1959); Chief of Clinics/Chief Training Officer Mary Mediatrix Medical Center Lipa City, Batangas **Dr. Edgardo F. Faustino** (1968-1969); Educator and Foundress Binangonan Garden of Learners **Elenita Flores** (1955-1956); and Senior Assistant Vice President of U-Bix Corporation **Jose C. Gondra** (1966-1967).

Other recipients are former Binangonan Vice Mayor and at present, Prefect of Discipline at La Salle Greenhills High School Department **Raul A. Miguel** (1964-1965); Vice President for Advertising of the Philippine Daily Inquirer **Felipe R. Olarte** (1968-1969); Office-Law Practitioner **Atty. Ricardo M. Rivera** (1965-1966); Former Rizal Governor **Hon. Casimiro M. Ynares, Jr.** (1962-1963); Former Binangonan Mayor Engr. Cesar M. Ynares (1968-1969); and Businesswoman and Director of Philippine Women's Business Council **Annie C. Tan-Yee** (1973-1974).

Also part of the affair is the presentation of the Fr. Martin Strong Recognition Award to the first six graduates of the institution. They are Dr. Felipe A. Vital, former board member of Rizal Legislative Council and a retired dentist; Gloria S. Aramil; Lourdes C. Jerusalem; Caridad A. Aprecio, and two others who have already passed away.

The Grand Alumni Homecoming will be held on December 29, 2007, Saturday, 7 p.m. at the College Quadrangle. All graduates are expected to come.

Outstanding Alumni of Binangonan Catholic College (Formerly Binangonan Catholic High School)

Former Rizal Gov. Hon. Casimiro M. Ynares, Jr

Engr. Cesar M. Ynares

Dr. Edgardo F. Faustino

Mr. Felipe R. Olarte

Dr. Edith A.Doblada

Col. Melencio A. Cerda

Dr. Ildefonso F. Alvarez

Mr. Raul A. Miguel

Atty. Carmelo L. Arcilla

Atty. Ricardo M. Rivera

Mr. Jose Gondra

Mrs. Elenita D. Flores

Ms. Annie Tan-Yee

Prof. Clarence M. Batan

TESTIMONIAL DINNER:
Dec. 14, 2007 at 7:00pm
BCC Campus

GRAND REUNION - DIAMOND JUBILEE
60th Foundation
December 29, 2007
7:00 pm - BCC Campus

Recipients of Fr. Martin Strong Award

Dr. Felipe A. Vital

Ms. Lourdes C. Jerusalem

Mrs. Caridad A. Aprecio

Mrs. Gloria S. Aramil

For more details: Binangonan Catholic College 652-0098

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Congratulates its
Vice President for Advertising
FELIPE (PEPITO) OLARTE
and other
Outstanding Alumni of
Binangonan Catholic College
(Formerly Binangonan Catholic High School)

Warm greetings to the Manuel L. Quezon University on its 60th Anniversary and Congratulations to its Outstanding Alumni and Achievers !!!

The Manuel L. Quezon University Alumni Association, Inc.
916 R. Hidalgo St., Quiapo, Manila 1001

Messages

It is a distinct honor to extend my sincere congratulations to the alumni of Manuel L. Quezon University during its 60th Anniversary of its foundation.

The success of a university in its mission to educate is measured not only by the quality of its faculty and students, but also by the performance of its alumni in their respective professions.

It is significant that in the past 60 years, our school has produced many distinguished members of the judiciary - six Justices of the Supreme Court, nine Justices of Court of Appeals, three Justices of Sandiganbayan and countless Judges of the Regional and Metropolitan Trial Courts. Several of our graduates have been appointed to the Cabinet and to constitutional bodies such as the Commission on Elections and Commission on Audit. Several of our graduates have been elected to the Senate, the House of Representatives and the local governments. Many of those who enrolled in our School of Graduate Studies became Generals in the Philippine National Police and Directors of the National Bureau of Investigation. Even those who engaged in private practice and in the noble profession of teaching have excelled and reaped honors.

Indeed, the sterling achievements of our graduates in their chosen fields of endeavor, their notable contribution to nation building, and their edifying example to the students, reflect on the school and make Manuel L. Quezon University truly proud of them.

On behalf of the Manuel L. Quezon University, I therefore express my appreciation and commendation to its alumni.

Eduardo D. de los Angeles
President

On the occasion of the Diamond (60th) anniversary of my beloved Alma Mater, I wish to congratulate with grateful thanksgiving MLQU.

Congratulations with pride to our thousands of alumni- the legal minds that dominate and continue to dominate our country's legal system and those who have contributed to the country's economic, political, industrial; and intellectual development.

We have kept faith with the Quezonian spirit by helping change our society into one which is more just, more human, one more fully Christian- and so we say: " Well done"

Congratulations again, more power, the best is yet to come - MLQU Forever !

LAURA CRUZ SUNICO
Director, Alumni Affairs

My warmest felicitations and congratulations to the leaders, staff, faculty, students and alumni of the Manuel L. Quezon University as she celebrates her 60th anniversary. We the alumni, are proud to be part of this milestone.

At 60, MLQU, just like diamond, sparkles and shines in her glory. She continues to radiate in brilliance and value in the lives of many young men and women who desire to become noble professionals.

Just like diamond, she has weathered time and trials , She has withstood the challenges of the ever-changing environment and has become one of the leading educational institutions in the country serving as cradle of young and brilliant minds.

Just like diamond, her intrinsic value has remained and appreciated overtime.

As MLQU celebrates 60 years of quality education, may she continue to bask in brilliance of her rich history and unprecedented track record.

We are truly proud of you ! Truly a gem to behold!

In behalf of the Alumni Association, I also wish to congratulate the 60 outstanding alumni who have made MLQU even prouder.

To our beloved MLQU, more power!
God bless us all.

RUPERTO P. SOMERA, Ph. D.
President, MLQU Alumni Association, Inc.

The Board of Directors, 2007-2008

Officers and members of the MLQU Alumni Association, Inc. Board of Directors, 2007-2008
Front row (l to r), L. Sta Maria, Secretary; L. Lava; L. Abela; R. Somera, President; L. Sunico, Director, MLQU Office of Alumni Affairs; V. Ganir; G. Panganiban. Back (l to r) F. Lledan; R. Avenido; G. del Valle; T. Ongoco, Vice President; A. Agustin; A. Tuquero; A. Alvendia, Treasurer. Not in the picture is Atty. Pete S. Principe.

The Outstanding Alumni

MLQUAA
1. Atty. Augusto B. Sunico

SABA
1. David Balangue
2. Francis Monera

ARCH
1. Benjamin B. Soriano
2. Rufino Cruz

SEAS
1. Leonardo A. Quisimbing, Jr.
2. Willie Gaa
3. Jannet Amurao

ENG'G
1. Roberto "Obet" Pagdanganan

SGS
1. Ruperto Somera
2. Renato C. Dacudao
3. Avelino Razon

LAW
1. Augusto Barœlon (posthumous)
2. Venicio Escœlin
3. Kaulayao Faylona (posthumous)
4. Lorenzo Miravite (posthumous)
5. Sedfrey Ordoñez
6. Ricardo C. Puno
7. Amado C. Dizon (posthumous)
8. Ambrosio Cantada (posthumous)
9. Alicia V. Sempio-Diy
10. Francisco de Guzman
11. Isagani A. Cruz
12. Benildo G. Hernandez (posthumous)
13. Wenœslao R. Lagumbay (posthumous)
14. Saklolo A. Leaño
15. Antonio J. Villegas (posthumous)
16. Norberto B. Quisumbing, Jr.
17. Jose A. R. Melo
18. Perlita J. Tria Tirona
19. Artemio G. Tuquero
20. Jose C. Vitug, Jr.
21. Jesus F. Guerrero
22. Wigberto E. Tañada
23. Ruben T. Reves
24. Lilia B. De Lima
25. Martin S. Villarama, Jr.
26. Roberto M. Lagman
27. Vicente Vinarao
28. Dennis M. Villa-Ignacio
29. Ma. Luisa S. Dizon-Villarama
30. Rodolfo B. Albano, Jr.
31. Benjamin Tabios (posthumous)
32. Manuel R. Pamaran
33. Conrado Molina
34. Magtanggol C. Gunigundo
35. Hilarion L. Aquino
36. Nicolas Lapeña, Jr.
37. Ismael Andres
38. Serafin Camilon
39. Gen. Romeo Espino
40. Rosalinda F. Dimapilis-Baldoz
41. Conrado Vasquez, Jr.
42. Luis L. Victor
43. Jose V. Yap
44. Ernani Cruz Paño
45. Enrico A. Lanzanas
46. Vestra I. Cuyugan
47. Ricardo M. Ilarde

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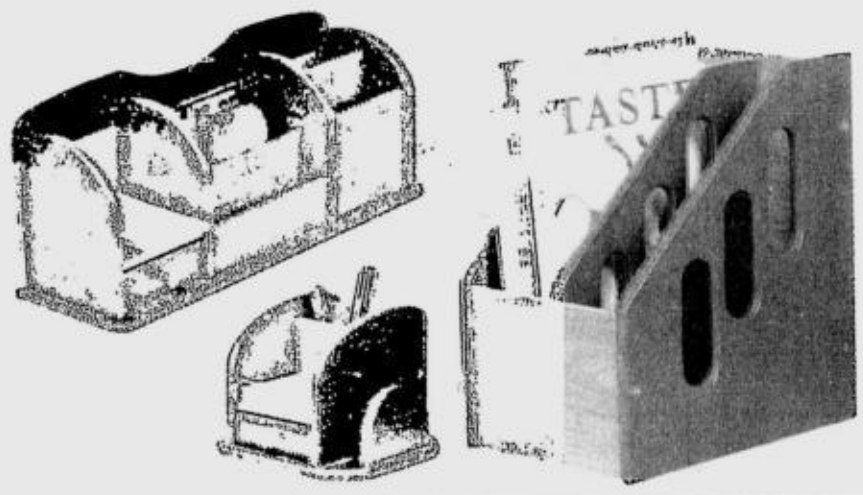

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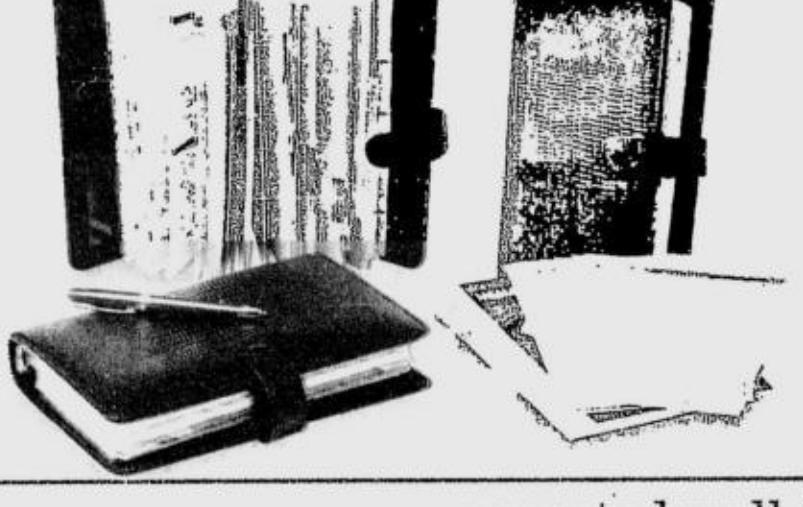

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WHAT'S INSIDE

■ **Bitbit makes** it four for cyclists / A36

SPORTS

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■ **Softball** scores a golden double / A36

ALLAN Salangsang, skipper of the victorious Philippine team; Jervy Cruz, Gabe Norwood, Jonathan Fernandez and Jason Castro (first five from right) listen as the national anthem is played at the awarding ceremonies. RAFFY LERMA

Boxing protest fails to stop RP

Cagers capture gold; batters sweep it

By Ernesto A. Gonzales
Sports Features Editor

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—THE PHILIPPINES turned the boxing finals into a farce on Thursday to dramatize its protest against hometown decisions, which officials acknowledged would affect the country's campaign even before the start of the 24th Southeast Asian Games here.

Baylon puts away 8th judo gold /A36

Only Larry Semillano fought to the end—and lost, as expected—against the veteran Manus Boonjumnong with the six other Filipino finalists either retiring without throwing a punch or giving up midway in their respective bouts against Thai rivals.

After throwing sportsmanship out of the window, the dethroned overall champion Filipinos managed to climb to fifth overall with 39 gold medals as the high-profile national basketball team sparked a six-win effort for the day.

The cagers completed a four-game sweep of the country's favorite sport here by whipping Thailand, 94-53, after softball pulled off another golden double with easy wins by the Blu Girls and the Blu Boys.

Tshomlee Go, already an Olympic qualifier, finally gave taekwondo a gold in the men's under 60 kg division and Marites Bitbit towed a six-strong lead pack at the finish to rule the women's 116.10-kilometer massed start race in cycling.

And John Baylon, already 43, nailed an eighth straight judo gold by finishing off Indonesian Johanes Taslim in 1 minute and 50 seconds of their title bout in the half-middleweight class.

The last full day of action on Friday is expected to finally decide the three-way race for fourth among the Philippines, Indonesia and Singapore.

Thailand, showing an

BOXING/ A34

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SEA GAMES Medal Tally

COUNTRY	G	S	B				
Thailand	154	109	94	Singapore	39	35	35
Vietnam	60	50	74	Myanmar	10	22	38
Malaysia	54	45	82	Laos	5	6	28
Indonesia	41	53	72	Cambodia	2	5	9
Philippines	39	71	86	Brunei	1	1	4
				Timor Leste	0	0	0

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PETRON

Gold that glitters most in the bag after 4 years

By Musong R. Castillo

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—THE GOLD THAT GLITTERS MOST for Filipinos was formally minted Thursday night after the Philippines beat host Thailand to a pulp, 94-53, to bring the curtains down on men's basketball action at the 24th Southeast Asian Games here.

Jason Castro and Beau Belga led the Filipinos with 14 points each, while reigning UAAP MVP Jervy Cruz of University of Santo Tomas had 12 points and 14 rebounds as the Filipinos posted their fourth lopsided win in a row and crowned themselves the region's undisputed cage kings.

"Mission accomplished," said coach Junel Baculi, who steered the Philippines to its eighth straight championship in the Games, the first since Vietnam in 2003 after Manila scrapped the event two years ago over a leadership crisis in local caging.

But the title was almost in the bag even before the team set foot on this bustling province 300 kilometers northeast of Bangkok, after Harbour Centre owner Mikee Romero managed to assemble a team that looked unparalleled on paper.

And play with unparalleled strength the team did.

The Filipinos won their four games by an average of close to 44 points, never getting in trouble at any stage in the tournament.

Romero, with his wife and friends, led the celebration before a fair-sized crowd at the Keelapirom Stadium. And they waved the Philippine flag proudly to dramatize the Filipinos' domination of the event.

"This is for everyone back home, for those who prayed and stayed with this team since its inception," Romero said. "It gives us great pride and joy to be able to help the country reaffirm its (basketball) status in the region."

Romero spent about P20 million to bankroll the team's training and participation in the Games.

"It was all worth it," he said. "The way the boys played makes me proud to have been the one to put the team together."

There were only two RP teams before this one that lost a basketball match in the Games—the squad in the 1989 SEAG finals and the other in an elimination game in the 1993 SEAG.

But this batch showed no letup and was all business.

The RP five debuted with an 136-82 trashing of Cambodia that left little doubt as to the big disparity of the Filipinos' strength compared with those of the rest of the field.

"That has been the mind-set of the team, to win as convincingly as possible," Baculi said. "Winning the championship the way we did makes all the hard work worth it."

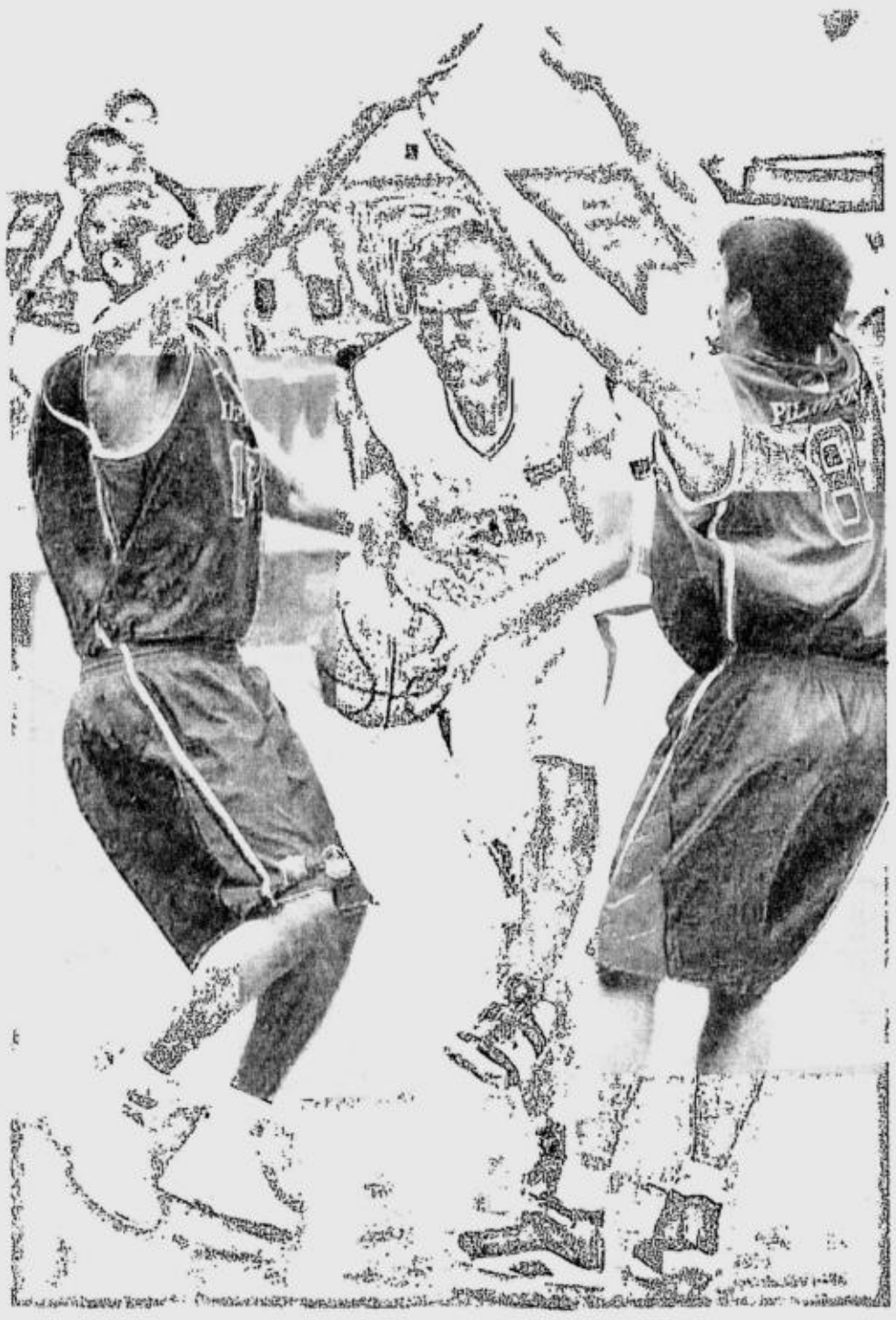
An 18-1 bomb early in the first quarter was all the Filipinos needed to erase a 9-13 deficit and take the front to stay.

The scores:

PHILIPPINES 94—Castro 14, Belga 14, Cruz 12, Vergara 12, Bautista 8, Norwood 7, Alonzo.7, Chan 6, Rodriguez 5, Fernandez 5, Salangsang 4, Tan 0.

THAILAND 53—Piroon 17, Kaedum 15, Vivattanapongpetch 12, Kruatiwa 4, Sillapapipat 4, Samoechai 1, Jantharanlyom 0, Santhiyakul 0, Rai 0.

Quarters: 25-14; 40-28; 65-40; 94-53



GABE Norwood and Erick Rodriguez thwart a driving Ratdech Kruatiwa of Thailand in the gold-medal match of men's basketball at the Keelapirom Stadium. RAFFY LERMA

Filipino medalists
(As of Dec. 13, 2007)

GOLD

1. Joey Barba, Mountain Bike (Men's Downhill)
2. Ryan Arabejo, Swimming (Men's 200m Back)
3. Miguel Molina, Swimming (Men's 400m Indiv. Medley)
4. Rene Herrera, Athletics (Men's 3000m Steeplechase)
5. Arniel Ferrera, Athletics (Men's Hammer Throw)
6. Benjamin Tolentino Jr. and Jose Rodriguez, Rowing (Men's Double Sculls)
7. Ryan Mendoza, Triathlon (Men's Duathlon)
8. Marestella Torres, Athletics (Women's Long Jump)
9. Emmanuel Reyes and Maira Rosete, Dance Sport (Standard Quickstep)
10. E. Reyes and M. Rosete, Dance Sport, (Standard Tango)
11. Michelle Bruzola, Fencing (Women's Individual Epee)
12. Emerson Segui, Fencing (Men's Individual Foil)
13. Antonio Gabica and Marlon Manalo, Billiards and Snooker (Men's 9-Ball Doubles)
14. Miguel Molina, Swimming (Men's 200m Indiv. Medley)
15. B. Tolentino, Rowing (Men's Lightweight Singles Sculls)
16. Rubilen Amit, Billiards (Women's 9-Ball Pool Singles)
17. Mariano Mariano, Wushu (Women's Under 60kg)
18. Willy Wang, Wushu (Men's Nanquan, 3 events combined)
19. Henry Dagmil, Athletics (Men's Long Jump)
20. Daniel Coakley, Swimming (Men's 50m Free)
21. Miguel Molina, Swimming (Men's 200m Breast)
22. Ryan Arabejo, Swimming (Men's 1500m Free)
23. Victor Espiritu, Track Cycling (Men's Points Race)
24. Amaya Paz, Archery (Women's Individual Compound)
25. Julius Felicisimo Nierras Jr., Athletics (Men's 400m)
26. Armando Bernal, Avelino Victorino Jr., Almario Vizcayno and Wilfredo Vizcayno Jr., Fencing (Men's Team Epee)
27. Alfie Catalan, Track Cycling (Men's Individual Pursuit)
28. James Walsh, Swimming (Men's 200m Butterfly)
29. Miguel Molina, Daniel Coakley, James Walsh and Ryan Arabejo, Swimming (Men's 4x100 Medley Relay)
30. Jennifer Chan, Amaya Paz and Abigail Tindugan, Archery (Women's Compound)
31. Ronato Alcano, Billiards (Men's 8-Ball Pool Singles)
32. Annie Albania, Boxing (Women's Fly 50kg)
33. Sheila Mae Perez, Aquatics (Diving, 3m Springboard)
34. Marites Bitbit, Cycling (Women's Road Race)
35. Softball (Women)
36. Softball (Men)
37. John Baylon, Judo (Men's Half Middle-81kg)
38. Basketball (Men)
39. Tshomlee Go, Taekwondo (Men's Under 67kg)

SILVER

1. Eric Ang, Carag Carlos and Jethro Dionisio, Shooting (Men's Trap Team)
2. Jaqueline De Guzman, Shooting (Women's Skeet)
3. Paul Brian Rosario, Patricio Bernardo and Gabriel Tong, Shooting (Men's Skeet Team)
4. Mary Grace Milgar, Athletics (Women's 400m Hurdles)
5. Julius Sermona, Athletics (Men's 500m)
6. Rosie Villarito, Athletics (Women's Javelin Throw)
7. Eusebio Quiñones, Mountain Bike (Men's Cross Country)
8. Alvin Amposta and Nestor Cordova, Rowing (Men's Lightweight Double Sculls)
9. Marcus Valda, Wrestling (Men's Freestyle 84kg)
10. Midel Digue, Athletics (Men's 800m)
11. Harlene Orendain, Fencing (Women's Individual Epee)
12. Gemma Silverio, Wrestling (Women's Freestyle 59kg)
13. Alven Aragon, Wrestling (Men's Freestyle 74kg)
14. Jimmy Angara , Wrestling (Men's Freestyle 66kg)
15. Nida Cordova and Midelle Gabilgno, Rowing (Women's Double Sculls)
16. George Vilog, Triathlon (Men's Event)
17. Alessandra Araulio, Triathon (Women's Event)
18. Reyes and Rosete, Dance Sport (Standard Viennese Waltz)
19. Reyes and Rosete, Dance Sport (Standard Slow Foxtrot)
20. John Erolle Melencio and Dearlie Gerodias, Dance Sport (Latin American Jive)
21. J. Melencio and D. Gerodias, Dance Sport (Latin American PD)
22. Walbert Mendoza, Fencing (Men's Individual Sabre)
23. James Walsh, Swimming (Men's 100m Butterfly)
24. Miguel Molina, Daniel Coakley, Kendrick Uy and James Walsh, Swimming (Men's 4x100m Freestyle Relay)
25. Julius Sermona, Athletics (Men's 1000m)
26. Mary Jane Estmar, Wushu (Women's Under 52 kg)
27. Benjie Rivera, Wushu (Men's Under 56 kg)
28. Mark Denver Atienza, Rolando Canlas Jr., Ramil Endriano and Emerson Segui, Fencing (Men's Team Foil)
29. Mary Rose Alfonso, Joanna Franquelli, Ma. Wendelyn Mendoza, Lenita Otadoy, Fencing (Women's Team Sabre)
30. Earl Benjamin Yap, Archery (Men's Individual Compound)
31. Danilo Fresnido, Athletics (Men's Javelin Throw)
32. Deborah Samson, Athletics (Women's Pole Vault)
33. Mia Allyson Howell, Michelle Mancenido, Veena Tessa Nuestro and Ma. Dinah Remolacio, Fencing (Women's Team Foil)
34. Water Polo (Men)
35. Renante Briones, Weightlifting (Men's 94 kg)
36. Edward Daliva, Walbert Mendoza, Gian Carlo Nocom and Edmon Velez, Fencing (Men's Team Sabre)
37. Nancy Quitiotes, Judo (Women's -48kg)
38. Rugby (Men)
39. Erica Totten, Swimming (Women's 200m Butterfly)
40. Alice Kate Aparri, Boxing (Women's Light Fly 48kg)
41. Annalisa Cruz, Boxing (Women's Light Bantam 52kg)
42. Jouvelist Chilem, Boxing (Women's Bantam 54kg)
43. Ronijen Solla, Boxing (Women's Feather 57kg)
44. Mitchel Martinez, Boxing (Women's Light 60kg)
45. Noel Espinosa, Karate (Individual Men's Kata)
46. Nerlyn Hulnda, Pencak Silat (Women's Under 60kg)
47. Men's Team, Traditional Boat Race (10 Crews 1000m)
48. Nancy Bercasio and Sonia Bruce, Lawn Bowls (Women's Pairs)
49. Alexander Briones, Taekwondo (Men's Under 84kg)
50. Diego Lorenzo, Equestrian (Individual Jumping)
51. Antoinette Rivero, Taekwondo (Women's Under 67kg)
52. Godfrey Castro, Boxing (Men's Fly 51 kg)
53. Junel Cantancio, Boxing (Men's Bantam 54 kg)
54. Jose Mari Pabillore, Karate (Men's Over 75 kg)
55. Gema Casem, Meldred Habluetzel, Mildred Vicente and Violeta dela Cruz, Petanque (Women's Triples)
56. Orlando Tacuyan Jr., Boxing (Men's Feather 57 kg)
57. Joegin Ladon, Boxing (Men's Light 60kg)
58. Anya Tanpinco, Golf (Women's Individual)
59. Ferdinand Aunzo, Anthony Fernando, Mhark Fernando and Jhonnel Ababa, Golf (Men's Team)
60. Anya Tanpinco, Chihiro Ikeda and Regina de Guzman, Golf (Women's Team)
61. Cherli Tugday, Karate (Women's Open)
62. Larry Semillano, Boxing (Men's Super Light 64kg)
63. Sheila Mae Perez, Diving (Women's 1m Springboard)
64. Brent Velasco, Muay Thai (Bantam 54kg)
65. Junie Tizon, Boxing (Men's Middle 75 kg)
66. Maximino Tabangcora, Boxing (Men's Light Heavy 81kg)
67. Kirstie Elaine Alora, Taekwondo (Women's Under 59kg)
68. May Libao, Muay Thai (Women's Light Fly 48kg)
69. Anna Joy Fernandez, Muay Thai (Women's Fly 51 kg)
70. Marcel Subang, Muay Thai (Women's Bantam 54 kg)
71. Anna Marie Rey, Muay Thai (Women's Feather 57kg)

BRONZE

1. Emerito Concepcion, Shooting (Men's 10m Air Rifle)
2. Men's Hoop, Sepak Takraw
3. Women's Hoop, Sepak Takraw
4. Eliezer Sunang, Athletics (Men's Shot Put)
5. Jobert Delicano, Athletics (Men's Triple Jump)
6. Nino Surban, Mountain Bike (Men's Cross Country)
7. Marites Bitbit, Mountain Bike (Women's Cross Country)
8. Maribel Jambora, Wrestling (Women's Freestyle 48kg)
9. Ma. Cristina Vergara, Wrestling (Women's Freestyle 51kg)
10. Clotheide Nillas and Johnalyn Pedrita, Rowing (Women's Lightweight Double Sculls)
11. Frederick Taino and Cecil Mamiit, Tennis (Men's Team)
12. Denise Dy and Diane Matias, Tennis (Women's Team)
13. August Benedicto, Triathlon (Men's Duathlon)
14. Analiza Dysangco, Triathlon (Women's Duathlon)
15. Reyes and Rosete, Dance Sport (Standard Waltz)
16. Reynato Rener Mercado and Judith Anne Melencio, Dance Sport (Latin American Cha Cha Cha)
17. Rolando Canlas Jr., Fencing (Men's Individual Foil)
18. Joanna Franquelli, Fencing (Women's Individual Sabre)
19. Arnold Villarube, Athletics (Men's Decathlon)
20. Junrey Bano, Julius Felicisimo Nierras Jr., Rodrigo Tanuan Jr. and Ernie Candelario, Athletics (Men's 4x400 Relay)
21. Kendrick Uy, Swimming (Men's 100m Free)
22. Jaclyn Pangilinan, Swimming (Women's 100m Breast)
23. Nicole Santiago, Jaclyn Pangilinan, Georgina Gandionco and Erica Totten, Swimming (Women's 4x100m Freestyle Relay)
24. Eduardo Buenavista, Athletics (Men's Marathon)
25. Jho Ann Banayag, Athletics (Women's Marathon)
26. Jose Rodriguez, Rowing (Men's Single Sculls)
27. Arland Macasieb, Triathlon (Men)
28. Maria Melza Lucas, Triathlon (Women)
29. Hidilyn Diaz, Weightlifting (Women's 58 kg)
30. Margarito Angana, Wrestling (Men's Freestyle 55 kg)
31. Daniel Parantac, Wushu (Men's Taijiquan-2 events)
32. Janice Hung, Wushu (Women's Taijiquan-2 events)
33. Bill Vicente Vicera, Boxing (Men's Fly 45kg)
34. M. Bitbit, Road Cycling (Women's Individual Time Trial)
35. J. Melencio and D. Gerodias, Dance (Latin Amer. Samba)
36. Claro Roland, Muay Thai (Flyweight 51 kg)
37. Rene Catalan, Wushu (Men's Under 52 kg)
38. Michelle Mancenido and Veena Tessa Nuestro (tie), Fencing (Women's Individual Foil)
39. Edmon Velez, Fencing (Men's Individual Sabre)
40. Ryan Arabejo, Swimming (Men's 400m Freestyle)
41. Reynato Rener Mercado and Judith Anne Melencio, Dance Sport (Latin American Cha Cha Cha)
42. Robert Andrew Garcia, Squash (Men's Singles)
43. Roque Mana-ay Jr., Wrestling (Men's Freestyle 60kg)
44. Michelle Bruzola, Ma. del Carmen Galvez, Mary Catherine Kong and Harlene Orendain, Fencing (Women's Team Epee)
45. Romnick Ghie Pabalate, Muay Thai (Light Fly 48 kg)
46. Jul-Omar Abdulhakim, Pencak Silat (Men's Under 50kg)
47. Emraida Asmad, Pencak Silat (Women's Under 55kg)
48. Laruan Zaidi, Muay Thai (Feather 57kg)
49. Emerson Obiena, Athletics (Men's Pole Vault)
50. Jan Paul Morales, Cycling Track (Men's 1km Time Trial)
51. Jaclyn Pangilinan, Swimming (Women's 200m Breast)
52. Erica Totten, Swimming (Women's 200m Free)
53. Daniel Parantac, Wushu (Men's Taijiquan-2 events)
54. Mercedita Manipol, Athletics (Women's 10,000m)
55. Narcisa Atienza, Athletics (Women's Heptathlon)
56. Albert Pabila, Boxing (Light Fly 48kg)
57. Olod Jay, Muay Thai (Light 60 kg)
58. Harold Gregorio Jay, Muay Thai (Men's Welter 67kg)
60. Dulce Purugganan, Bodybuilding (Women's Fitness)
61. Marvin Cordero, Mark Javier and Ian Wayne Larsen, Archery (Men's Recurve)
62. Helen Dawa, Judo (Women -52 kg Half-Light)
63. Estregay, Liwanen, Judo (Women -57 kg Light)
64. Mae Soriano, Karate (Women's Under 53kg)
65. Ramon Hector Franco, Karate (Men's Under 55kg)
66. Rolando Lagman, Karate (Men's Under 65kg)
67. Jul-Omar Abdulhakim, Pencak Silat (Men's Under 50 kg)
68. Emraida Asmad, Pencak Silat (Women's Under 55kg)
69. Women's Team, Sepak Takraw (Regu)
70. Juan Ernesto Mendoza III, Taekwondo (Men's Under 76kg)
71. Women's Team, Traditional Boat Race (10 Crews 1000m)
72. Richard Pep Agosto, Weightlifting (Men's 105 kg)
73. Rosita Bradborn, Lawn Bowls (Women's Singles)
74. Angelo Morales, Emmanuel Portacio and Hommer Mercado, Lawn Bowls (Men's Triples)
75. Aine Knight, Maita Witheridge and Ronalyn Greenlees, Lawn Bowls (Women's Triples)
76. Ma. Criselda Roxas, Taekwondo (Women's Under 72kg)
77. Zardo Domenios, Diving (Men's 3m Springboard)
78. Futsal (Women)
79. Karen Ann Solomon, Judo (Women's Middle -70kg)
80. Rick Jayson Senales, Judo (Men's Middle -90kg)
81. Maria Esperanza Manansala, Karate (Women's Under 60kg)
82. Cherli Tugday, Karate (Women's Over 60kg)
83. Eric Taino and Diane Matias, Tennis (Mixed Doubles)
84. Esther Marie Singson, Taekwondo (Women's Under 55kg)
85. Veronica Domingo, Taekwondo (Women's Under 63kg)
86. Basketball (Women)

Gritty Mamiit has two shots at gold

CECIL Mamiit: Up next, Danai Udomchoke RAFFY LERMA

By Musong R. Castillo

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—CECIL MAMIIT AND Denise Dy upset the top-seeded Thai pair of Sonchat Ratiwatana and Tamarine Tanasugarn, 6-4, 6-1, on Thursday to barge into the finals of the 24th Southeast Asian Games' mixed doubles event.

The 31-year-old Mamiit returned in the afternoon to team up with Eric Taino in 6-1, 6-2 swamping of Malaysia's Kanagaraj Balakrishnan and Razalan Rawi for a seat in the men's doubles semifinals.

Mamiit has now earned two shots at a gold medal.

His first shot at gold—a possible third in his SEAG career that started in the 2005 Manila Games—comes Friday when he seeks payback against Thai ace Danai Udomchoke in his defense of the singles crown at center court of His Majesty the King's 80th Birthday Anniversary complex here.

"Things will be different (in the singles finals)," Mamiit said after the mixed doubles victory. "I saw what he can do (in the team event) and I know how to work him now. I know I can still beat him, and with luck, I may just be able to do that."

Udomchoke, ranked 164th in the world, conquered Mamiit in the second singles of the RP-Thailand semifinal match in the team event last week. That put their head-to-head duel at 3-3.

The defending champion Thai twins of Sonchai and Sonchat Ratiwatana, the same team which also beat Mamiit-Taino, 6-4, 6-2, a week ago, also marched into the Final Four after a 6-2, 6-4 victory over the Malaysian pair of Adam Jaya and Yew Ming Si.

Christopher Benjamin Rungkat and Elbert Sie of Indonesia, 4-6, 7-5, 10-8 winners over Johnny Arcilla and PJ Tierro, of the Philippines, will be the twins' semifinal opponents.

Mamiit-Taino will still await the winner of the Weerapat Doakmaiklee-Kirati Siributwong team from Thailand versus the fourth-ranked Vietnamese tandem of Minh Quan Do and Kuok Khanh Le.

Boxing protest fails to stop RP surge

From page A33

unquenchable appetite for winning on the 80th birth anniversary of its King, remained in a class by itself with 154 golds so far with Vietnam (60) and Malaysia (54) secured in their respective slots.

Amateur boxing president Manny Lopez and RP chef de mision Monico Puentevella railed over what they perceived were biased judging and officiating following the country's four losses in five bouts against the Thais on Wednesday.

But hometown decisions in this event have been prevalent ever since the SEAG started in 1977 and everybody just grinned and endured it. Even the then Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra complained about this when the Filipinos were winning everything in sight en route to a first-ever overall championship two years ago in Manila.

This time, Lopez hinted at boycotting Thursday's finals. It looked like he would make good his threat when flyweight Godfrey Castro and bantamweight Junel Cantancio showed up in the ring and then raised their hands in a gesture of surrender when the referee called the start of their bouts.

After both were declared losers by retirement in the first round, featherweight Orlando Tacuyan was pulled out after two rounds while trailing 18-3. Then lightweight Joegin Ladon also quit in the first round after taking a blow to the body.

Semillano went all the way and lost 10-4, before middleweight Junie Tizon and light heavy Maximino Tabangcora both retired in the second round.

Interviewed while Lopez's fighters were making a mockery of the final bouts, Philippine Olympic Committee head Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr., who had precisely warned the RP athletes and officials about hometown decisions, said: "We're supporting it."

Puentevella, who said the country avoided possible sanction from the international boxing body by aborting the boycott move, stressed that the POC had to support Lopez's move.

SINGSON stands over Laos' Viengkham whom she beat on points in the quarterfinals. RAFFY LERMA

"Lopez is our officer, he is, as an NSA head, part of the Olympic body. We respected and supported his move," he added.

The Harbour Centre-Philippine team lived up to its billing with patron Mikee Romero waving a big RP flag to cheer the Filipinos, who are back in these Games after basketball was scrapped in 2005 due to the country's Fiba suspension.

The Blu Girls blanked the Singaporeans, 7-0, to complete a five-game sweep of women's softball while the Blu Boys flashed their meanest form in an 11-2 rout of the Indonesians, who were coached by a former Blu Boy himself, pitcher Hernando Posadas.

Go scrambled past Vietnam's Nguyen Min Hien, 6-5, to keep his under 60 kg title while Bitbit, after two bronze medals, broke through in the road race with a time of 3:28.20.

Another gold was secured later in the day when Lee Van Corteza and Antonio Gabica arranged an all-Filipino clash for the men's 9-ball singles title.

The Filipinos could have easily grabbed third place again but there were unexpected losses—Shiela Mae Perez in the women's 1-meter springboard and taekwondo's Esther Marie Singson in the women's under 55 kg division and Kirstie Elaine Alora in the women's 59 kg.

All three settled for silver medals, the same output golf contributed as the men rallied all the way from fourth place and the ladies held on to second place for good behind Anya Tanpinco, who was runner-up in the individual race.

Another silver came in Pattaya through a gutsy effort by Diego Lorenzo in the individual show jumping on board KC Discovery while still recovering from a bout with dengue.

Cecil Mamiit, who will seek the gold in tennis against Thai Danai Udomchoke Friday, also reached the mixed doubles finals with Denise Dy while boosting his partnership with Eric Taino to the men's doubles semifinals.

The Filipinos will also shoot for the baseball gold Friday against the Thais in Bangkok, where the entire bowling team has yet to win any medal at all.

The two women's beach volleyball teams were eliminated in the quarterfinals but the unheralded men's partnership of Parley Tupaz and Rhovyl Verayo reach the semifinals.

3 golf silvers as RP teams, Anya end up 2nd

TANPINCO: Six off Thai gold medalist

By Musong R. Castillo

BONANZA RANCH, KHAOYAI—FERDINAND AUNZO WAS HOT ON A DAY the Philippines needed it most, firing a day-best five-under-par 67 on Thursday to rally the Filipinos to a respectable silver-medal finish in the 24th Southeast Asian Games men's golf competition.

Aunzo, a former caddy from Eastridge in Rizal province, shot eight birdies as the RP team pooled 209 for the day and an 858 total, 20 shots off the winning 838 of Thailand, which closed out with 208.

Anya Tanpinco settled for a final-round 75 and an even-par 216 for the silver medal in the individual contest while boosting the RP ladies to second, also behind the Thais, in team play.

Thailand's P. Kongkraphan put away the gold with a 70 and a 54-hole total of 210, six shots in front of Tanpinco.

Aunzo's last-hole bogey cost him a share of third place with A. M. Nazari of Malaysia, who shot a 70 for 282, five strokes behind the 277 of gold medalist Pipatpong Naewsuk and four off K Aphibarmat, who also turned in 70s.

Making the turn with an astounding 6-under 33, Aunzo slowed down with a string of bogeys from the 16th hole.

Jhonnel Ababa's 70 and RP Amateur champion Anthony Fernando's 72 rounded out scoring for the men's squad. Mark Fernando's 74 did not count.

"This is good enough, considering that this is an all-rookie team," non-playing skipper Caloy Coscoluella said of his boys. "As long as this team stays intact, we will win the gold in the next SEA Games."

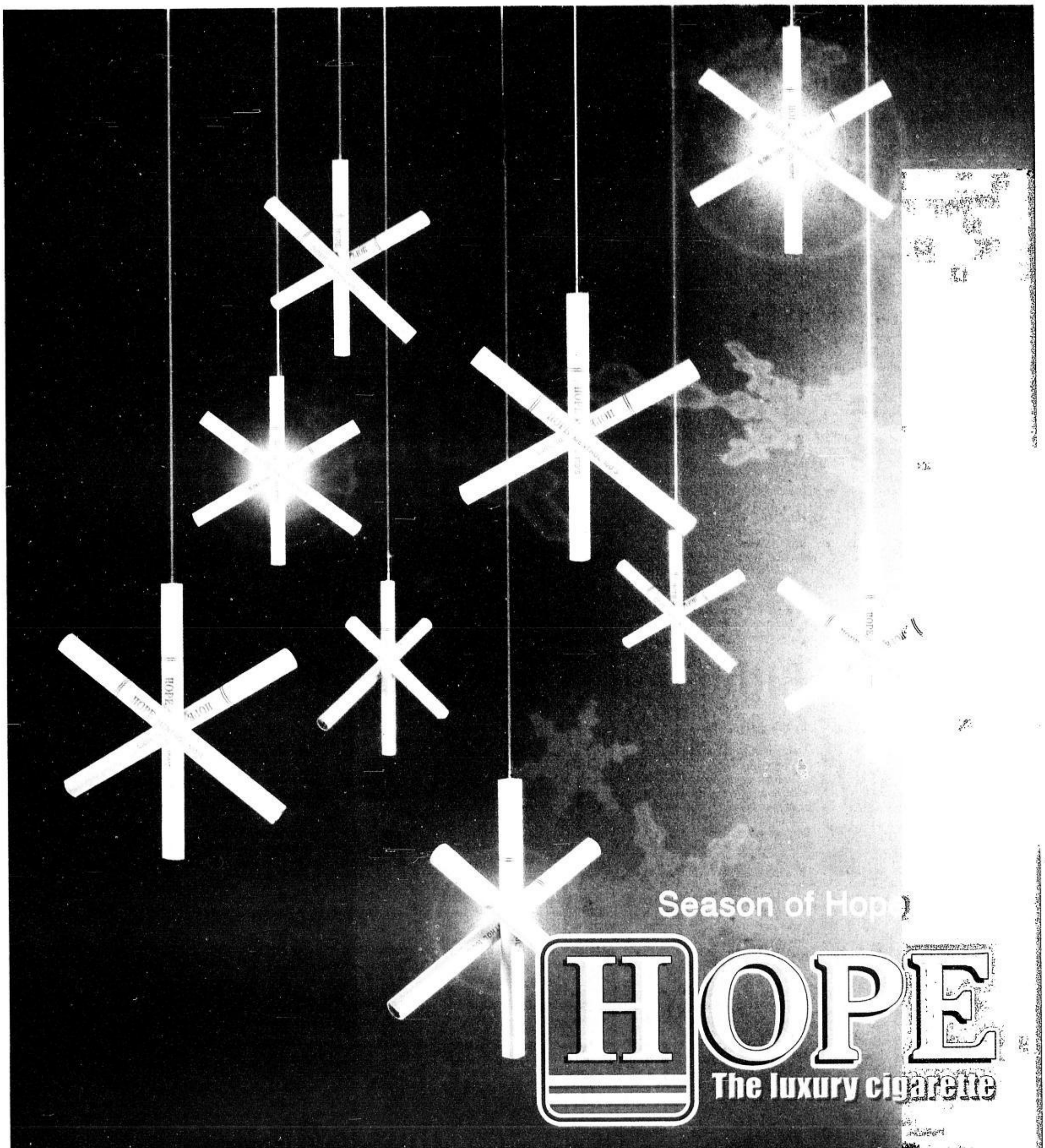
Regina de Guzman counted for the first time in three rounds, her 75 giving the RP ladies 150 for the day and 439 overall, nine adrift of the Thais, who also drew a 74 from Y Kawinpakorn for 144.

Chihiro Ikeda's 79 failed to count for the Filipinos.

"The course was just too short for her," Tanpinco, the Filipino spearhead, said of the 15-year-old Kongkraphan in Filipino. "She was outhitting me by at least 60 yards (off the tees). Her rescue (club) was just equal my driver. I tried, but I just couldn't really get near her."

Indonesia took the bronze with 441 on the 73 of Lidya Ivana Jaya and the 74 of T Juriah Suharto.

The Indonesians also won the men's team bronze, dislodging the Malaysians, as Andik Mauludin shot a 69, Yuniarto Bennita returned a 71 and Hardjito fired a 71 for a final-round 213 and a 860 total.



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Easy does it as softball teams hammer out another double

By Ernesto A. Gonzales

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—The softball double came easily for the Philippines Thursday with the Blu Girls and Blu Boys dominating the sport again in the 24th Southeast Asian Games without a loss at the football field of the Nakhon Ratchasima Rajabhat University here.

The Blu Girls blanked their Singapore rivals, 7-0, in the grand finals, after posting the same score in their semifinal showdown Wednesday. They also blasted the Singaporeans, 8-1, in their first meeting in the eliminations Sunday.

The Blu Boys also needed to crush their Indonesian foes three times en route to a second straight men's crown.

After scrambling past the Filipino-coached Indonesians in the semifinals, the Blu Boys were never threatened in the finals, posting an 11-2 victory.

The Blu Boys earlier pulled out a 9-2 win over Indonesians, who are being handled by former ace pitcher Hernando Posadas, who shone for the Blu Boys in the '80s.

The Indonesians proved they were tougher in baseball, however, as they fought the Filipinos on even terms before the defending champions manufactured a run in the eighth inning that decided the contest, 1-0.

The close win lifted the Filipinos into a winner-take-all showdown for the gold Friday against the host sluggers from Thailand at the Queen Sirikit Sports Center in Bangkok.

Both the Filipinos and the Thais go into the title match with 4-0 slates under the single round robin format for six teams.

CHRISTMAS is going to be anything but blue for the Blu Girls. The women's softball team captured yet another gold for the country with an overpowering performance in the final, beating Singapore, 7-0. The men's team helped make it a golden double for the Philippines. RAFFY LERMA

Judo's Baylon bags eighth straight gold

Diver Perez takes silver

By Musong R. Castillo

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—THE DURABLE JOHN BAYLON WON AN EIGHTH straight Southeast Asian Games gold medal Thursday, outclassing the men's 81-kilogram half-middle field at the RMUTI gymnasium here.

Baylon, a 43-year-old who has been undefeated since debuting in the 1991 Games in Manila, stretched his win streak after an arm lock "ipon" victory (equivalent to a KO in boxing) over Johanes Taslim of Indonesia in 3:25 of their gold medal match.

Still a bachelor because of the rigorous demands of his sport, Baylon also won over Ronnarong Maruethachinda of Thailand and Hai Long To of Vietnam before that championship victory.

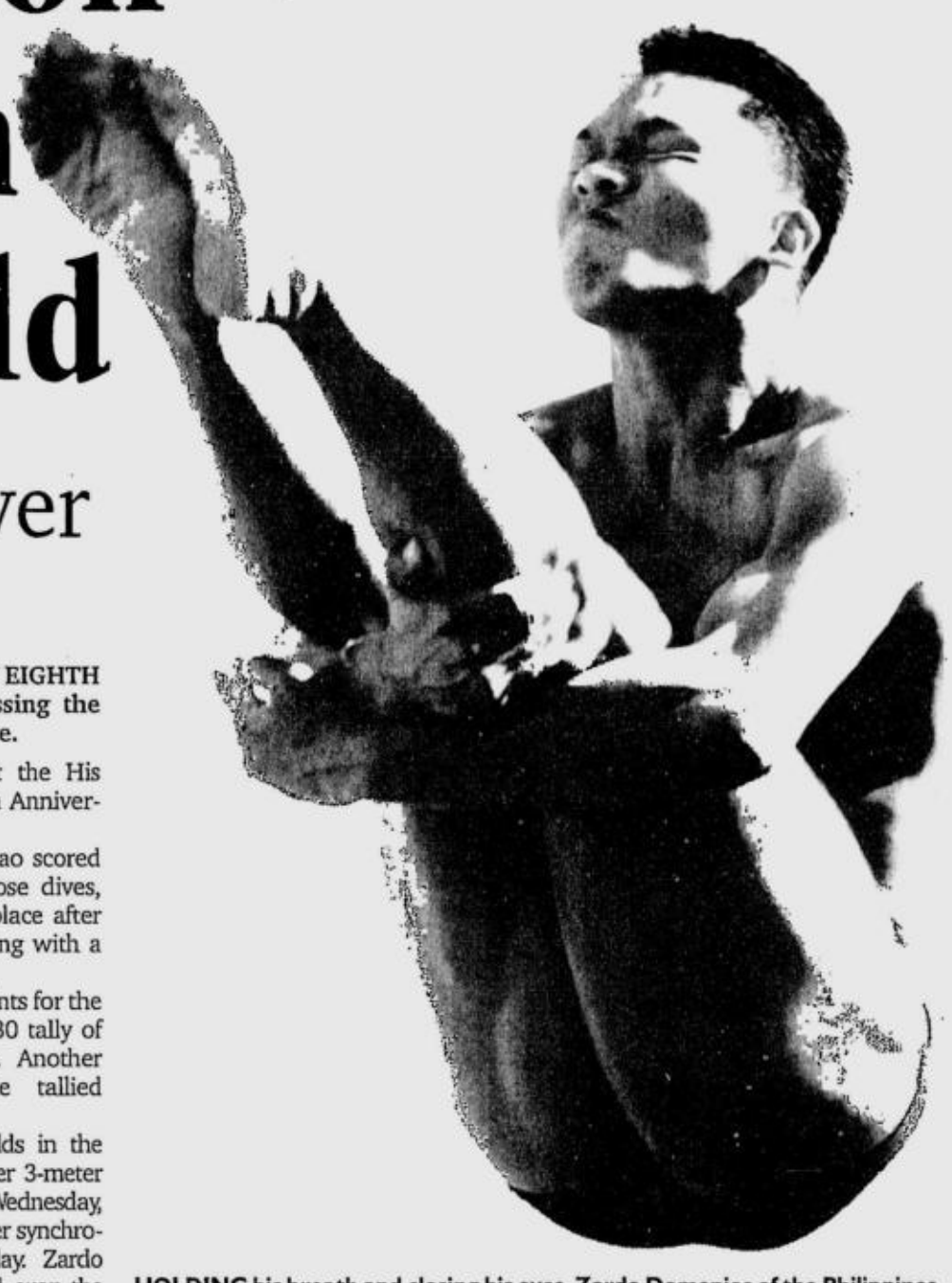
"*Masaya ako, parang naiyak ako sa tuwa* (I'm so happy, I feel like crying because I'm overjoyed)," Baylon told reporters.

In diving, Sheila Mae Perez failed in her bid for a repeat triumph in the women's 1-meter springboard after sputtering in her second and third dives in second day of action at the His Majesty the King's 80th Birth Anniversary pool.

The 20-year-old from Davao scored just 48.30 and 51.60 in those dives, which took her out of first place after she nailed her opening routing with a 54.60 effort.

She totaled just 265.80 points for the silver, way short of the 278.30 tally of Malaysia's Mun Yee Leong. Another Malaysian, Elizabeth Jimie tallied 263.10 for the bronze.

Perez, who won three golds in the 2005 Games and defended her 3-meter springboard title with ease Wednesday, will go for the women's 3-meter synchronized springboard final Friday. Zardo Domemios, on the other hand, won the bronze in the men's 3-meter springboard.



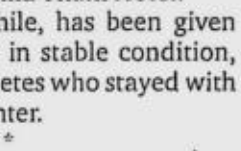
HOLDING his breath and closing his eyes, Zardo Domenios of the Philippines plunges into his bid in the 3-meter springboard diving final. REUTERS

Norwood a perfect teammate

By Musong R. Castillo

NAKHON RATCHASIMA, THAILAND—SALvador Andrada, the former long-time president of the Philippine Tennis Association, was rushed to the intensive care unit (ICU) of the Bangkok Hospital here late Wednesday night after complaining of chest pains and shortness of breath.

Another sports official, a coach married to a Filipino who refused to be identified so as not to get family back home worried, was also taken to the same facility because of symptoms of a mild heart attack.



The 73-year-old Andrada, who had a successful bypass operation earlier this year, watched tennis action at the His Majesty the King's 80th Birthday Anniversary courts, getting to and from the venue on foot under searing heat Wednesday afternoon.

That is because there are no vehicles allowed inside the athletes' village, where he stays, and one would need to walk a long way from his room to the parking lot where rented vehicles are parked.

Officials of the Philippine Olympic Committee, where Andrada is the vice chair for membership, rushed the former tennis president to the hospital after taking him from his room at the Sima Thani Hotel.

The coach, meanwhile, has been given treatment and is now in stable condition, according to some athletes who stayed with Andrada at the ICU center.

* * *

They call Gabe Norwood the consummate teammate.

Members of the Harbour Centre-backed Philippine five, which formally won the basketball gold Thursday, are all praises for the former George Mason star in the US NCAA not only because of his skills but because of his attitude as well.

Team insiders told the INQUIRER that this was not more evident than in a team-building session in Tagaytay a couple of weeks before the trip to here, when team officials deliberately checked in the team to a run-down hotel.

"He slept on the floor because the beds were too small (for him)," the team official said. "What he did was take the mattress off the bed and placed it on the floor, and we heard nothing from Gabe. He just wants to play."

Being a team man showed in the Filipinos' game against Malaysia on Wednesday, when Norwood took just one shot, which he made, to finish with just two points and let the homegrown members do all the damage in the title-clinching game.

BITBIT: Heroic ride PDI PHOTO

Bitbit makes it 4 for cyclists

By Musong R. Castillo

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—NO TEAMmate? No problem.

Riding a me-against-the-world race in an event where help from teammates is vital, this proud and indefatigable female Filipino cyclist simply decided that nothing was going to stand between her and the gold.

Maritess Bitbit on Thursday ruled the massed start women's road event in the 24th Southeast Asian Games by out-kicking a huge field and sustaining cycling's productive contribution to the Philippine gold medal cache.

The 30-year-old Bitbit, deprived of a teammate after RP team coaching staff decided to pull out Apryl Eppinger at the last minute, turned in a clocking of three hours, 28 minutes and 20 seconds for the 116.10-kilometer race over well-paved roads in Mittrahap area, around 75 kilometers outside of the main stadium here.

That was the fourth gold for the sport, making cycling the third-biggest gold machine for the battered Philippine contingent after swimming, which won eight, and athletics, which pocketed five.

Swimming and athletics also created a dent in the Games by shattering records in several events.

But for sheer drama, Bitbit's golden ride may very well be ranked among the top performances of the country.

Bitbit was ranged against 18 others, including teams of four coming from Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam, and a team of five from Indonesia.

Although it was an individual event, road races have a team element to them in that riders often rely on their teammates for support along the way.

To help the best rider in their team in pacing, support cyclists often shield a teammate against the headwind to help that rider preserve his or her strength for the crucial stretch.

Bitbit had no such help as she, true to her name, singlehandedly carried the country's hopes and beat Thatsani Wichana of Thailand in a race to the finish.

Thi Phuong Phi Vo of Vietnam was third.

In the men's race, Ryan Ariehaan Hillmant of Indonesia scooped up the gold medal with a comfortable win over Suhardi Hassan of Malaysia.

Hillmant was timed 4:13.02, while Hassan clocked 4:14:37; Phat Dat Trihn of Vietnam was third with the same time, nipping the Philippines' Irish Valenzuela, the Tour ng Pilipinas' top rookie last year, and Thailand's Phuchong Saiudomsin.

Victor Espiritu, who won the track's points race in controversial manner three nights ago, checked in a badly-beaten 17th in his pet event, with Warren Davadilla, a former Tour winner, arriving seventh at 4:14.44.

Male spikers ease sting of Pascua, Ilustre loss

By Musong R. Castillo

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—PARLEY TUPAZ and Rhovyl Verayo easily hurdled their quarterfinal foes in the men's beach volleyball competitions of the 24th Southeast Asian Games, whitewashing Thailand's Sittichai Sangkhachot and Montree Chaemnoi, 21-0, 21-0, Thursday at His Majesty the King's 80th Birthday Anniversary courts here.

Tupaz and Verayo quietly made their way into the knockout phase of their division after topping Pool C with a 1-1 slate, winning out via the tiebreak against teams from Vietnam and Indonesia after dropping only two sets in two matches.

Up next for the Filipino pair is the Indonesian team of Andy Ardiyansah and Koko Darkuncoro, a 21-15, 21-15 winner over Malaysia's Rafi Asruki Nordin and Rafiq Arumi Mohd.

Their victory somehow took the sting of the loss of a more favored volleyball pair.

Diane Pascua and Heidi Ilustre tumbled out of the quarterfinals in women's beach volleyball, taking a 21-11, 21-23, 14-16 loss to Indonesia's Devota Rahawarin and Yokbeth Kapasiang.

Ilustre and Pascua, a couple of 5-foot-10 Fil-Am stunners, blew control in the second set and an 8-6 lead in the third to get the door like Michelle Laborte and Michella Carolino, the second RP team in the women's draw.

Laborte-Carolino was eliminated earlier by Thailand's top-seeded pair of Yupa Phokongploy-Kulna Kamoltip, 15-21, 9-21.

It was the sixth straight victory for the Thai pair counting its unbeaten run in the classification phase.

Phokongploy-Kamoltip inflicted Pascua-Ilustre's only loss in the classification round, a 19-21, 27-29 decision on Tuesday.

DIANE Pascua (left) and Heidi Ilustre flop on the sand court after losing their women's beach volleyball quarterfinal match. RAFFY LERMA

Lorenzo settles for silver

PATTAYA—DIEGO Lorenzo, the Philippine bet in equestrian's show jumping event, settled for the silver medal in individual competition Wednesday night in the 24th Southeast Asian Games here.

But Lorenzo's silver finish was good enough, considering that the 17-year-old student of International School, who rode KC Discovery, came into the battle barely recovered from dengue, according to Mitos Belofsky, secretary general of the Philippine Equestrian Federation,

Belofsky said they had sent three athletes here, but were hounded by many problems, including the athletes' health.

Belofsky added they were asked to use a reserve horse, because the horse they brought did not pass the horse inspection, usually done by the veterinarian of the host country and the jury.

Only seven riders actually qualified for the event, including eventual gold winner Qabil Ambak of Malaysia and compatriot Syed Omar Almohdzar, and bronze medalist Pongsiree "Pu Kai" Bunluewong of Thailand.

Two other Filipinos—Mateo Lorenzo and Daniela Virata—failed to qualify in the team event of the competition held at the Horseshoe Point of this resort haven.

In reality, there's no TV?

By Marc Anthony Reyes

WHERE IS THE television coverage?

Apparently, even the Southeast Asian Games chief of mission Monico Puentevella is asking the same question regarding the TV coverage of the ongoing meet in Thailand.

"I really don't know," said Puentevella in a text message from Thailand. "I thought it is on everyday and live."

A week into the biennial games, there was no live coverage yet even in awaited events like boxing, swimming and basketball.

Snippets of the competition are shown late at night, sometimes a day late over NBN Channel 4. GMA-7, on the other hand, comes up with items on its news programs.

Yesterday, while Filipino boxers were "retiring" from their final bouts against Thai opponents apparently in protest of the way fights were being judged, the NBN was showing replays of the women's basketball preliminaries pitting Philippines and Malaysia.

"NBN sent plenty of people here and GMA 7 is also here," added Puentevella. "I don't know what's happening."

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D. Draws will be announced on leading newspapers
4. Weekly validity period is from 12:00am Monday to 11:59pm Sunday. All tickets bought from Monday to Sunday should be sent in by Sunday 11:59pm to qualify. P2.50 per entry.
5. Prizes above P10,000 subject to government tax.
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Hot Realtors tackle vulnerable Bulls

Welcoat battles TNT

MAGNOLIA's Rico Villanueva gets sandwiched by Mark Telan (left) and Asi Taulava of Coca-Cola. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

RED BULL IS VULNERABLE AT this point, but Sta. Lucia Realty would rather not count on it.

The Realtors are shooting for a third straight win against a Red Bull side orphaned by its take-charge guy in the Smart-PBA Philippine Cup today at the Cuneta Astrodome.

"Red Bull is still a very strong team with or without Cyrus Baguio," said Sta. Lucia Realty coach Boyet Fernandez. "We don't want to take chances."

Fernandez practically knows what he speaks of. It is founded solidly on Magnolia's surprising defeat at the hands of the Bulls in a recent out-of-town game.

Leading by as many as 15 points in the third quarter, the Beverage Masters tumbled in the end as they allowed the Bulls to steal the game built on a valiant stand by Junthy Valenzuela, Mick Pennisi and Celino Cruz.

Baguio, who missed Red Bull's loss against Talk 'N Text and victory over Magnolia, remains in confinement after contracting chicken pox two weeks ago. The high-flying Baguio averages a team-best 18 points per game.

"I'm expecting a tough physical match so we're not going out there unprepared," said Fernandez.

The Realtors are coming off a come-from-behind win over the Barangay Ginebra Kings last Sunday, their second straight victory and sixth overall in 12 games.

While Kelly Williams presided over the Sta. Lucia uprising with three triples in the dying minutes, it was sniper Paul Mendoza who dealt the killer blow to the Kings after knocking in a fade-away jumper with 4.6 ticks left.

STANDINGS	W	L
Purefoods	10	3
Red Bull	8	4
Alaska	8	5
Magnolia	7	6
Sta. Lucia	6	6
Talk N Text	6	6
Air21	5	7
Ginebra	5	8
Coca-Cola	4	8
Welcoat	3	9

GAMES TOMORROW
(Cuneta Astrodome)
4:50 p.m.—Welcoat vs Talk N Text
7:20 p.m.—Red Bull vs Sta. Lucia Realty

Talk 'N Text will tangle with the slumping Welcoat Dragons in the curtain-raiser with the Phone Pals trying to regain their rhythm after trading Asi Taulava to the Coca-Cola Tigers.

The Phone Pals are on the same boat with the Realtors, having split the first 12 games capped by a 101-98 squeaker over highly fancied Purefoods TJ Giants.

Since Taulava left, the Phone Pals lost two straight games before getting back their footing against the Giants. In contrast, the Tigers have been reaping the benefits of the Taulava acquisition by winning three games in a row.

Dropping their last five games, the Dragons (3-9) are counting on the return of Jay-R Reyes from the injury list to turn their plunking fate around.

The 6-foot-7 Reyes hurt his left knee two weeks ago against the Kings and missed Welcoat's twin losses at the hands of the Air21 Express and the Giants.

June Navarro

Archers, Eagles silent on golf rosters

BOTH DE LA SALLE AND ATENEO OPT TO keep their cards close to their chest a week before the fourth La Salle-Ateneo Match Play '07 is played Dec. 19-21 at the Tagaytay Highlands.

Skippers of both teams said they are still finalizing their respective rosters at this stage.

Eighteen players, including two women and two seniors, will compose each squad with the Archers gunning for a third straight victory and the Eagles out to even things up with their arch rivals in a Ryder Cup style-format event.

Both teams are not required to divulge their lineups until the eve of the match.

But La Salle is expected to be led by reigning

MANOTOC

Asia-Pacific Seniors champion Tommy Manotoc, Raffy Garcia, Francis Gaston, Miko Alejandro, William Hong, JP Reyes, King Stehmeier and Louie Garcia, while reigning back-to-back national seniors titlist Iggy Clavecilla, Philippine Amateur champion Tonite Fernando, Manoling Chan, Jose Mari Hechanova, Jingy Tuason, Marcel Puyat, Junjun Plana and Jeric Hechanova are expected to spearhead Ateneo's bid. Teboy Javier will be a non-playing captain.

The ceremonial tee-off will be held on Dec. 18 with the first round to fire off Dec. 19 with six foursome matches.

Belle Corp. and Tagaytay Highlands, which have the rights to stage the La Salle-Ateneo Match Play, have promised to institutionalize the event in cooperation with the DLSAA Golf Club and the Ateneo Golf Foundation.

Willy N. Ocier, Founder of Tagaytay Highlands and Vice Chairman of Belle Corp., said Tagaytay Highlands will be ready to provide a different kind of challenge to the teams.

SPORTSWATCH

Doves rout Wildcats for 6th straight win

THE ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI COLLEGE Doves marched to their sixth straight win with a 95-56 rout of the National College of Business and Arts Wildcats in the 15th Smart-National Capital Region Athletic Association men's basketball tournament.

The Emilio Aguinaldo College Generals, on the other hand, pulled off their fourth win in a row by dumping the winless Rizal Technological University Blue Thunders, 85-71.

John Valderama scored a game-high 29 points for the Generals, who climbed to fourth position with their 4-3 win-loss slate.

Leomer Losentes showed the way for the Doves, who limited the Wildcats to 10 points in the third period of this event presented by Petron, Mikasa and Molten Balls.

Adela V. Giongco, 93

ADELA M. VILLAMIN GIONGCO OF Rosario, Cavite, died Tuesday afternoon, nine days short of her 94th birthday.

She was the grandmother of Bulletin sportswriter Nick Giongco.

She is survived by children Bienvenido and Consuelo, Rodrigo and Minerva, Danilo and Elvira, Estrellita and Romy, Virgilio and Pahita, Valentino, Mildred and Rody, Benedicto and Chona, Honorata and Jess and Benedicta and Johnny, 34 grandchildren and 33 great-grand children.

Her remains lie in state at the Giongco ancestral home (816 Rizal St.) in Rosario, Cavite. Interment will be on Tuesday afternoon at the Rosario Municipal Cemetery.

Zabong 5-cock derby up

PROMINENT DERBYISTS OF METRO Manila clash with their provincial counterparts in today's staging of DMG Zabong 5-cock derby, featuring more than 80 fights, at Pasay City Cockpit.

Hosts JV Magsaysay and Dicky Gonzales staked a guaranteed prize of P500,000.

In a rare showdown, cockers of Zambales, Bataan and Olongapo (Zabong group) will collide with Metro Manila derbyists, said pit manager Eric dela Rosa.

Salpukan resumes Monday

THREE MORE ELIMINATION ROUNDS will be staged on Dec. 17, 19 and 22 in connection with the *Pamaskong Salpukan* 6-cock derby of Makati Coliseum.

Those who will compete on Monday must present their entries at Makati Coliseum a day before the event, starting 2 p.m.

The blockbuster event, which has attracted 118 entries so far, offers P3 million, one brand new Toyota Innova and one passenger jeepney for an entry fee of P11,000.

Fore by Four tourney starts at Eagle Ridge

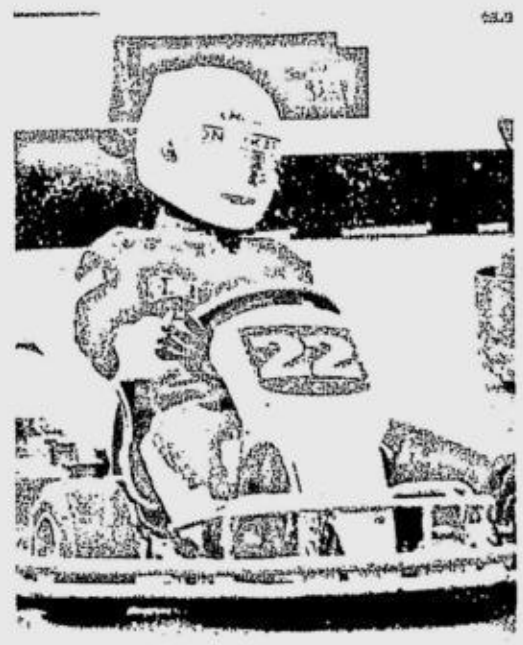
THE FORE BY FOUR INVITATIONAL tournament of the Eagle Ridge Golf and Country Club blasts off today with 608 members, guests and sponsors tackling the challenges of the four championship courses in Gen. Trias, Cavite.

This year's Fore by Four is touted as the biggest ever two-day tournament to be held in the country. With all entries guaranteed to play under the same conditions since they will tee-off and finish at the same time.

Shotgun start is 8:30 a.m. for both days with those in Class A, Class C and sponsors division tackling the Dye and Faldo courses and the ladies, Class B and Class D teams at the Norman and Aoki courses.

A Rio de Oro lot put up by Sta. Lucia Realty, a Toyota Vios, a trip to Hong Kong via Philippine Airlines and other prizes put up by LG, Petron, Texas Eagle/Turf Co., WG Golf, Callaway, Universal Turf Enterprises, Club Development, Corp, WFMC Trading, PacSports, HSBC, Microtel Inn&Suites and Club Marinduque are up for grabs.

Eagle Ridge project director engineer Wini Gob said extensive preparations for the event required major checks on all four courses.



ONE of JP Tuason's photos taken by Raymund Isaac up for auction to benefit charity institutions

Sports heroes pose for funds

THE COUNTRY'S TOP SPORTS ICONS RE-cently gathered together and posed for a fundraising campaign.

Multi-awarded race car driver JP Tuason, champion triathletes Tricia Chiongbian and Fred Uytengsu; sports couples and wakeboard champions Ernie and Jeena Lopez; and Martha and Arthur King pose for photographer Raymund Isaac for the Oakley Art Charity Fundraiser spearheaded by Oakley and its CEO Ramesh Dargani.

Their photos will be auctioned off in a special event which hopes to raise over P180,000 for various charities chosen by the icons like Bantay Bata, World Vision, Red Cross, Children's Hours, KIDS and Mabuhay Deseret.

Also featured in the exhibit are actor Diether Ocampo, Fashionistas Tessa Prieto-Valdez and Tim Yap and rocker JJ Ortega.

RP BET: Maico Buncio (third from left) shows his plaque, in recognition of his victories in the recent Shell Superbikes National Series and for clinching the Underbone 125 Rider of the Year title using Yamaha R-6 and Yamaha X-1 bikes. The 19-year-old rider will represent the country in the 2007 Yamaha Asean Cup Championship set Dec. 14-16 in Penang, Malaysia. Buncio is shown with (from left) FIM Motocross Asia president Macky Carapiet, Yamaha Motorcycle Philippines director Yano Takeshi, Yamaha adviser Yamaura Shin and Namssa president Ken Falco.

Benito, Beton keep kart crowns

ROBY BENITO AND MARK BETON KEPT their crowns in the 8th Arthur Tuason Memorial Cup (ATMC) held at the Speedzone in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, recently.

The 13-year-old Benito, coming from the tail end of the reverse grid Final Race, passed one driver after another until he wrested the lead on the sixth lap and kept it till the end to capture his first career back-to-back crown in the Petron Xcs Expert division.

Brandon Chin, a 17-year-old student of International School-Manila and a discovery of the TRS Interschool Kartfest, emerged runner-up while Jennifer Tumambing settled for third.

Marc Beton, a Manila Doctors student who placed third on the Interschool Kartfest Sprint class, copped the Standard Insurance Novice crown over Brian del Val and Jemimah Isidro.

This annual charity event raised a total of P140,000 which will benefit the Mabuhay Deseret Foundation—a charity institution that helps arrange treatment for less fortunate kids who are born with minor deformities and in need of corrective surgery.

Tuason Racing School Founding president JP Tuason, son of legendary racing champ Arthur Tuason, turned over the proceeds to Mabuhay Deseret Foundation representative Michael Johnson during the awarding rites.

Sharing the limelight was Aira Medrano who clocked a fastest laptime of 60.705 seconds as she led from start to finish to clinch the Cadet 60 crown over Martin Philip Azurin and third placer Edric Go.

Pichay gets BAP presidency

THE BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION of the Philippines remains committed to uplifting local caging with new officers and program of activities fpr 2008.

In a special session of the BAP National Congress held Wednesday, former congressman Prospero Pichay was elected the new BAP president.

Pichay, concurrently the head of the Philippine Chess Federation, replaces the resigned Go Teng Kok.

"I plan to devote much time with the BAP, and be a hands-on working president, and not just a paper president," said Pichay, who is also the chair of the Federation of School Sports Association of the Philippines (Fessap).

Pichay declared he would concentrate on developing homegrown talents rather than rely on the quick-fix policy of acquiring talents from abroad.

Showing up in yesterday's meeting were Congressman Luis R. Villafuerte, BAP chair; Davao del Sur Gov. Douglas Ra. Cagas, BAP vice chair; Tisha Abundo, BAP vice chair; Christian Tan, BAP executive vice president; and Tanduay executive Wilson Young, BAP vice president for Luzon.

Among the events slated for 2008 are the National Basketball League tourney in January and the 62nd National Students Basketball Championships in Cebu City from Feb. 24-March 1.

REP. LUIS Villafuerte congratulates Prospero Pichay (right).

Raptors hold off Mavs

Celtics conquer Kings despite poor shooting; Nuggets score

TORONTO—CHRIS BOSH SCORED 17 POINTS TO LEAD THE TORONTO Raptors to their third successive win with a 92-76 victory over the Dallas Mavericks on Wednesday.

Kris Humphries had 16 points and 12 rebounds for the Raptors (13-10), who were without injured guard TJ Ford, who was kept overnight in an Atlanta hospital on Tuesday after hitting his head on the floor following a foul by the Hawks' Al Horford.

Ford, who has a history of back and neck injuries that kept him out of the entire 2004-05 season, was cleared of any serious injury and returned to Toronto on Wednesday.

"We just hope we can get him past this and when he feels up to it, he'll let me know," said Toronto coach Sam Mitchell. "We are relieved he's feeling better."

Ford, who sat on the Toronto bench in the second quarter and received a standing ovation from the sell-out crowd of 19,800, said there was no timetable for his return.

"I don't know how long I'll be out, it all depends on how quickly my body recovers," said Ford.

The Raptors turned in a strong defensive performance against the Mavericks (14-9), who scored a season-low in points.

"You have to play great defense to win in the playoffs and we did that," said Bosh. "I'm really proud of my team mates."

In Indianapolis, Kareem Rush scored 22 points to lead the Indiana Pacers to a 117-102 win over the Chicago Bulls on Wednesday night in a wild game that featured five technical fouls and two ejections.

Jamaal Tinsley added 18 points and eight assists for Indiana in first home game since he was shot at, but unhurt, early Sunday morning in downtown Indianapolis.

Indiana coach Jim O'Brien was called for a technical foul with the Pacers trailing 38-24.

The Bulls were leading 41-36 with 3:51 left in the second quarter when Chicago forward Tyrus Thomas took exception to a hard foul by Indiana center Troy Murphy and responded by shoving him in the face. Murphy swung back, and players from both teams intervened before things escalated.

In Houston, Tracy McGrady scored 29 points and Yao Ming added 21 points and 13 rebounds as the Rockets nearly entered the record book for foul-shot futility before beating Detroit, 80-77.

The Rockets missed 14 of their first 15 shots from the line, before finishing 6-for-22 (27 percent).

In Philadelphia, Samuel Dalembert had 18 points, 11 rebounds and tied a career high with nine blocked shots as the 76ers edged Minnesota, 98-94.

In Charlotte, Raymond Felton scored 26 points and keyed a fourth-quarter surge to lead the Bobcats past the Los Angeles Clippers, 108-103.

In Boston, rookie Glen Davis had 16 points and nine rebounds, and made all 10 of his free throws in his first career start as the Celtics remained unbeaten at home with a 90-78 rout of the Sacramento Kings. Boston improved to an NBA-best 18-2.

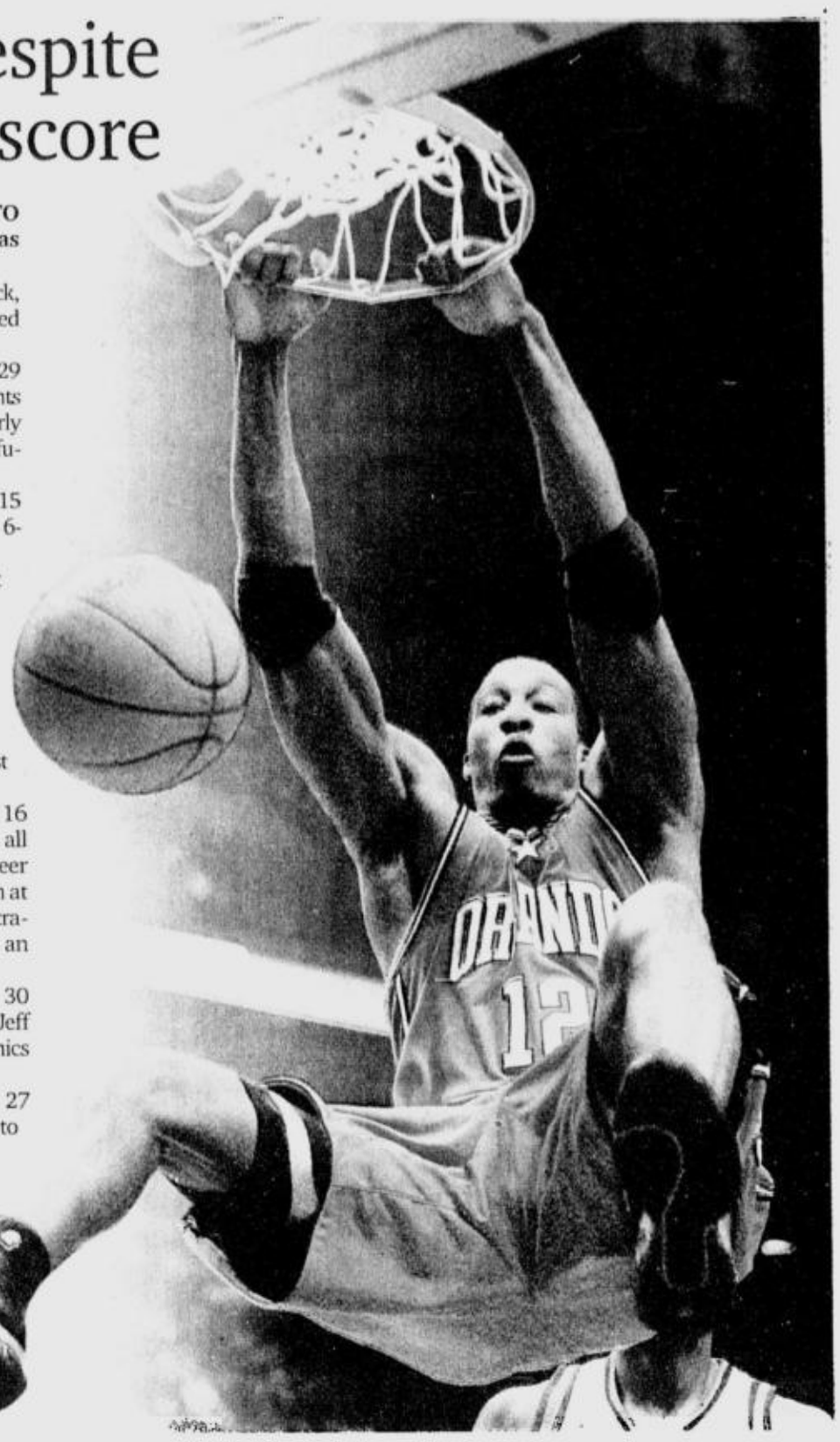
In New York, Kevin Durant scored 30 points, and fellow Seattle rookie Jeff Green added 17 to lead the SuperSonics past New York, 117-110.

In Milwaukee, Michael Redd had 27 points, 10 rebounds and nine assists to help the Bucks rip Orlando, 100-86, and snap a four-game losing streak.

In Denver, Carmelo Anthony had 32 points, including a three-point play with 38.4 seconds left, helping the Nuggets trip New Orleans, 105-99.

In Portland, Oregon, Travis Outlaw scored 22 points and had eight rebounds to help the Trail Blazers to their fifth straight victory, a 105-95 win over Golden State.

In Phoenix, Steve Nash—playing half the game with a chipped front tooth—had 29 points and 11 assists as the Suns nipped Utah, 103-98. *Reuters, AP*



ORLANDO Magic forward Dwight Howard scores off a dunk against the Milwaukee Bucks. Howard's heroics, however, failed to lift the Magic. AP

DOC RIVERS: It's a perfect storm only if the storm happens

Celtics coach, too, wants title badly

BOSTON—DEREK FISHER OF THE LA Lakers summed it up perfectly. He called the current Celtics situation "the perfect storm." And it's not just the presence of three title-starved, veteran players all pointing to one common goal. Fisher sees someone else in that storm: Doc Rivers.

"He never won it as a player, so this has got to be a big thing for him," Fisher said.

It is. But, as Rivers noted, "It's only a perfect storm if the storm happens."

And we won't know that until the spring.

But as much as Kevin Garnett, Ray Allen, and Paul Pierce want to get that elusive first championship, their collective desire in no way surpasses that of their coach.

Think about it: As a player, Rivers never played in an NBA Finals (although his team did). As a coach, he's never even won a playoff series. He wants it every bit as badly as his players.

"When he was a player, he had longevity," said Rivers' agent and longtime pal, Lonnie Cooper. "He was never an All-Star. And I think he had an empty feeling when he retired that he never played for a champion."

Rivers' Atlanta Hawks teams in the 1980s were good, just not good enough. They never could get by Boston or Detroit or Chicago.

Never had a chance

"In that time, we believed we had a chance, we really did," said Randy Wittman, Rivers' backcourt mate in Atlanta and now the coach of the Timberwolves. "But we just couldn't get over the hump.

After leaving Atlanta, Rivers came close to getting a ring. In 1993, he played 77 games for the Knicks, who had the best record in the Eastern Conference. He appeared in all 15 playoff games, averaging 30-plus minutes a game. But that team went down in the conference finals to the eventual champion Bulls; the indelible memory of that series is Charles Smith having his shot blocked time and again at the conclusion of Game 5. The Bulls, who were down, 0-2, in that series, won the last four.

"That New York feeling has been never erased," Rivers said. "I still don't like to talk about it. It brings back too much."

In 1994, the Knicks went to the Finals, but Rivers was injured—he played only 19 games in the regular season—and did not participate in the postseason.

The Knicks lost to Houston in seven.

As a coach, his Orlando teams scrapped and made the playoffs—and unfailingly lost in the first round. He's had three Boston teams and only one of them—the first—made it to the postseason.

Opportunity

"I didn't see any of this happening," he said. "Then, all of a sudden, it changes so quickly and you can't help but be excited. You want to take advantage of the opportunity, but it's really up to you to do it."

So far, 18-2 after 20 games indicates things are going well.

Does Garnett sense the same hunger in his coach that he knows is there in him, and in Allen and Pierce?

"I sense that he recognizes the hunger in us," Garnett said. "And it's vice versa. As much as he wants it, we want it."

New York Times News Service

IOC formally erases Jones from records

LAUSANNE, SWITZERLAND—DON'T look for Marion Jones' name in the Olympic record books any more. As far as the IOC is concerned, her five-medal performance at the 2000 Sydney Games never happened.

Jones was erased from the Olympic records Wednesday when the IOC formally stripped her of her three gold and two bronze medals. Once the world's biggest track and field star, Jones is now just a disgraced drug cheat.

"She is disqualified and scrapped from the results," IOC president Jacques Rogge said at the close of a three-day executive board meeting.

The International Olympic Committee also banned Jones from attending next year's Beijing Olympics in any capacity and said it could bar her from future games.

The IOC postponed a decision on redistributing her medals, including whether to strip her eight American relay teammates and whether to upgrade doping-tainted Greek sprinter Katerina Thanou to gold in the 100.

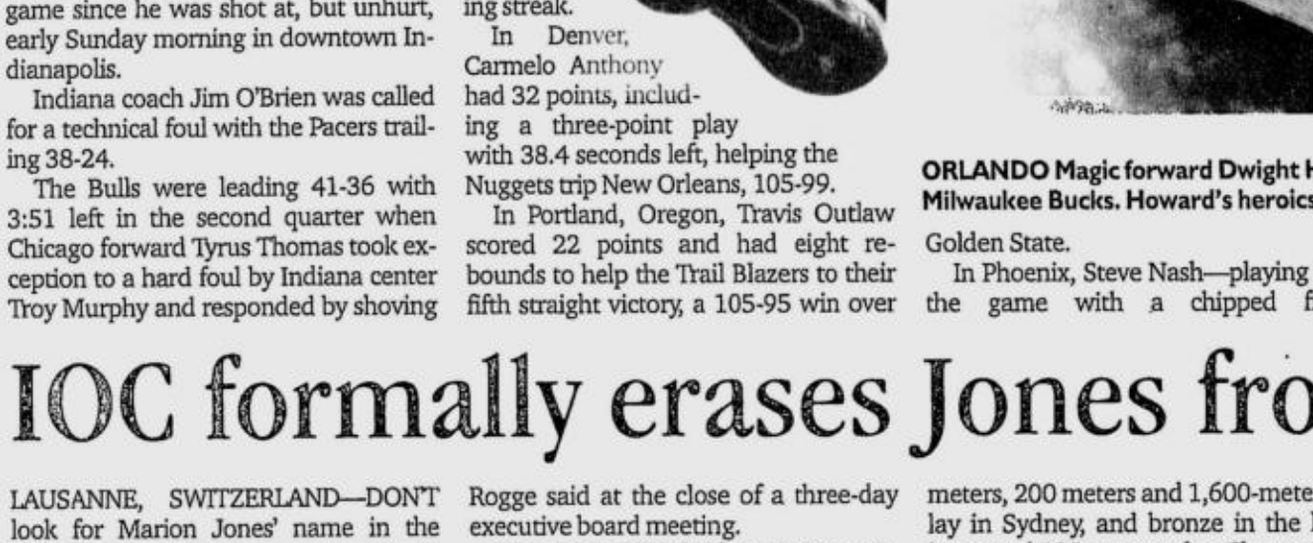
Jones won gold medals in the 100 meters, 200 meters and 1,600-meter relay in Sydney, and bronze in the long jump and 100-meter relay. She was the first female track and field athlete to win five medals at a single Olympics.

In addition to stripping her Sydney medals, the IOC disqualified Jones from her fifth-place finish in the long jump at the 2004 Athens Olympics.

Jones had already handed back her medals. The IOC said it would now ask the US Olympic Committee to get Jones to return the diplomas she received for competing in Sydney and Athens.

Last month, the International Association of Athletics Federations erased all of Jones' results dating to September 2000, but it was up to the IOC to formally disqualify her and revoke her Olympic medals.

"The issue has been damaging for Miss Jones, that goes without saying," Rogge said. "I still think that this is a good thing for the fight against doping. The more athletes we can catch, the more credible we are, the more deterrent effect we will have and the more we are going to protect clean athletes." *AP*



TAUFIK Hidayat finds himself again in the center of controversy after an argument with game officials. AFP

'Bad boy' Taufik ordered off court

NAKHON RATCHASIMA, THAILAND—Olympic badminton champion Taufik Hidayat was ordered off the courts by security staff after a heated standoff with match officials at the Southeast Asian (SEA) Games on Wednesday.

After beating Malaysian Yeoh Kay Bin to scrape through to the semifinals, the irate Indonesian gestured angrily at a line judge and waved his racket in the umpire's face before reluctantly shaking his hand and marching off the court.

Moments later, when he returned to the courts to calm down, a shirtless Taufik began remonstrating with worried-looking volunteers and officials before security guards surrounded him and told him to leave.

Taufik, 26, was unhappy with Thai officials' handling of his game, seeing a link with the title chances of fellow semifinalist and home favorite Boonsak Ponsana.

Ponsana eventually lost to Singaporean Yen Hui Kendrick Lee.

"If the Thais want to win the gold medal so much, I'll just give it to them," a furious Taufik told Reuters.

"The judging was terrible, bad calls happened to me so many times. I told him (the umpire) never to do that to another player."

The former world champion added: "I don't know what happened there, I don't know why they had to call security. They said I wasn't allowed to sit in these seats because they're VIP seats, but all the Thai players have been sitting here for days."

Taufik is one of badminton's most colorful characters and is as famous for his talent as he is for his fiery temperament and bad boy persona. *Reuters*

US golfers ready for drug tests

THOUSAND OAKS, CALIFORNIA—TIGER Woods said Wednesday that drug testing on the US PGA Tour will start July 8, and he is about halfway through the tour's anti-doping manual sent to players earlier this month.

"It's unbelievable how thick this thing is," Woods said after his pro-am round at the Target World Challenge, the final tournament of the year. "It's a lot to get through. I haven't gotten to the drug list yet."

But he's not worried about the testing, which will start Tuesday after his AT&T National at Congressional, saying he has been on the same nutritional program for years.

"I think it will help," Woods said of drug testing. "I certainly don't think it can hurt the game."

The tour released an outline of the anti-doping policy last month, and it sent players a comprehensive manual on Dec. 1. That was the first step in an intensive education program that will extend through June. Players must attend an anti-doping policy meeting in January, and they will have access to a 24-hour telephone service for questions about various substances.

Not everyone has started plowing through the manual.

US Masters champion Zach Johnson said he sent his to his trainer, and wasn't aware there was a mandatory meeting in January. *AP*

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Peso seen breaking into 40:$1 next week

OFW inflows continue to boost local currency

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO CONTINUED TO STRENGTHEN against the dollar, surging to a new seven-and-a-half-year high of 41.10 before closing at 41.24 on strong holiday remittances from overseas Filipinos and a regional currency market propped up by western central banks' concerted intervention against a global credit squeeze.

Currency traders suspected the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas of buying dollars at the day's peak of 41.10 yesterday morning, thus slowing down the local currency's appreciation.

After closing at the day's highs over the last few days, the BSP's intervention led the peso to close at the intra-day low yesterday. However, the peso still gained by 7 centavos from Wednesday's finish of 41.31 to the greenback.

PESO/ B8

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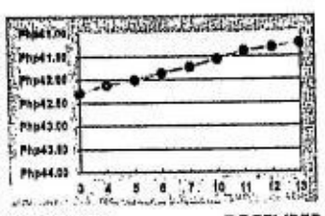
CURRENCIES



NOVEMBER DECEMBER

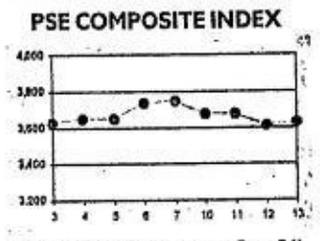
PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱41.24 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Dec. 13, 2007

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B6)

Shares close 0.6% higher

SHARE PRICES YESTERDAY CLOSED 0.6 percent higher as the market bounced back after a three-day slump, dealers said.

They said investors saw the recent slump as excessive considering a strong domestic economy, although they refrained from buying aggressively given the continuing volatility on Wall Street.

The composite index closed up 20.62 points at 3,626.21 off the day's high of 3,630.25. Volume amounted to 1.4 billion shares valued at P4.8 billion ($116.7 million).

There were 55 gainers and as many decliners, with 65 stocks unchanged. The broader all-share index rose 14.11 points to 2,221.48.

"The market's downturn in the past three sessions provided a good investment opportunity," said Lawrence de Leon of Accord Capital Equities.

SHARES/ B8

Gov't to cut charges on remittances

By Michelle V. Remo

FINANCE OFFICIALS HAVE TAKEN TO THE next level the effort to cushion dollar-earning Filipino workers abroad from the impact of a surging peso, hoping to soon set in place a key measure that would shave off institutional charges on remittances.

In a statement, the Department of Finance said government financial institutions (GFIs) were told to reduce charges collected from overseas Filipino workers sending money to their families here.

Already, officials of Land Bank of the Philippines are going over details of the proposed rate cut, the DOF said.

"Responding to the concerns of the overseas Filipinos and exporters is a priority of the administration," Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said in a statement. "The DOF is working to help protect these key contributors to economic growth from the peso's rapid appreciation against the US dollar."

The DOF also said Treasury bonds specifically meant for OFWs would be issued early next year.

OFWs who choose to invest in the bonds are assured of yields higher than that offered by regular bank deposits.

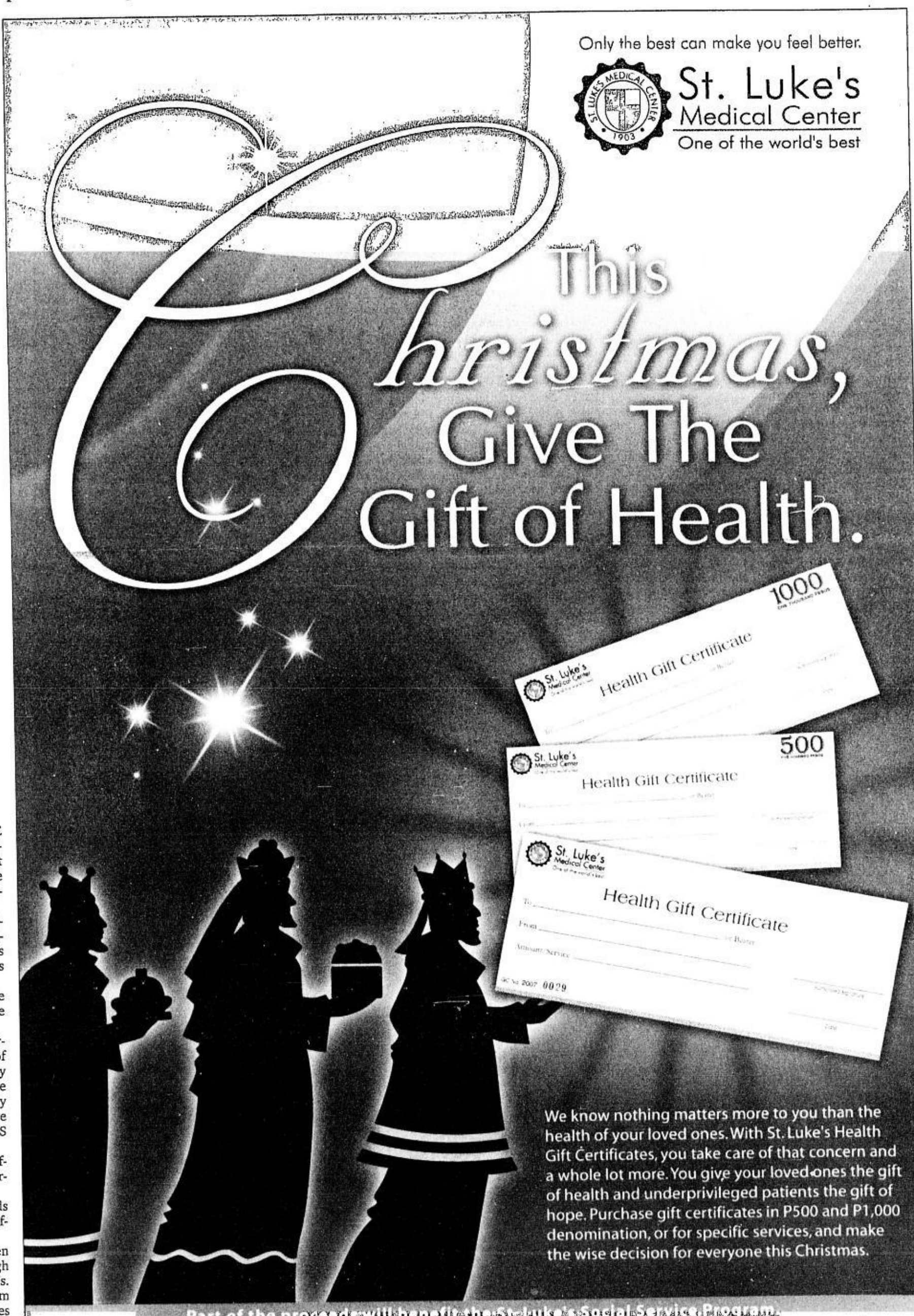
The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has been urging the national government, through the DOF, to float bonds tailor-fit for OFWs. Monetary authorities had said income from bond investments would help offset losses resulting from the rise of the peso.

The peso recently broke into the 41-to-a-dollar territory—much stronger than the 47 to 49 assumed by the government's economic managers when they drafted the budget and fiscal programs for the year.

As of end-November, the peso averaged 42.798 to a dollar, appreciating by over 8 percent from the 46.549 recorded for the whole of 2006.

An appreciating peso results in a lower rate of exchange, devaluing the dollars OFWs remit to their families here. It likewise makes Philippine-made goods more expensive in dollar terms, making them less competitive in the global market.

GOV'T/ B8



BCDA eyes 3rd bidding for 1.2-ha Fort Boni lot

Agency considers relaxing terms of reference

By Ronnel Domingo

THE BASES CONVERSION DEVELopment Authority is looking at a third bidding for its 1.2-hectare prime property at the Bonifacio Global City as the second auction held in November failed.

The planned third bidding would be part of the BCDA's asset disposition plan for 2008, from which it expects to raise at least P4.67 billion.

BCDA officials said the second bidding failed because only one of the 10 pre-qualified bidders submitted an offer and that the lone bidder even failed to complete the required documents.

The agency expected that the lot, known as the site for the Government Center for Investments or the Expanded Big Delta Lot, would yield at least P1.9 billion for the state coffers as it was worth at least P160,000 per square meter.

In a briefing, BCDA president Narciso L. Abaya said the agency planned to review the terms of reference used in the past two auctions and have some of its provisions relaxed so as to attract serious bidders.

Companies that have shown interest in the property included Ascendas, Filinvest Land, IPM Realty Corp., Landco Pacific, ML&H Corp., Net-Trump Group, Philtown Inc., Robinsons Land, Ayala Land Inc. and Century Properties.

"We may reconsider a provision in the TOR that provides that the bidder should have a ready substitute facility," Abaya said.

This requirement was supposed to allow the BCDA to bid out the property even if it was mortgaged with Banco de Oro.

Aileen Zosa, BCDA vice president, said the agency mortgaged the property to secure a standby facility amid anticipation of a shortfall in funds for its Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway project.

Zosa said BCDA could now afford to relax this provision of the TOR because the agency had just signed a P4-billion syndicated loan facility with a group of four lenders meant to cover the fund shortfall.

She said the proposed development of the property was medium to high-density mixed-use development—such as for commercial, residential, recreational and institutional uses.

Aside from the Expanded Big Delta property, BCDA plans to dispose of next year the 1.3-hectare Villamor Driving Range which is expected to generate P195 million and the 2.1-hectare PA SEG lot worth about P150.2 million.

The BCDA also plans to bid out the 7-hectare North Bonifacio lot worth about P700 million and the 6.3-hectare NCBD Lots worth P1.7 billion.

The BCDA expects long-term earnings from the North Bonifacio lots to reach P2 billion and from the NCBD lots, P3 billion.

Unilever to open ₱1.2-B deodorant plant in early '08

UNILEVER PHILIPPINES Inc. is launching early next year a P1.2-billion deodorant factory, as it expects further growth in its overall business in the country and its export operations.

MEHTA NIÑO JESUS ORBETA

Sanjiv S. Mehta, company chair and chief executive, said in a roundtable discussion with the Inquirer Business staff that the facility being built in the vicinity of the firm's headquarters in Manila would produce sticks and roll-on deodorant.

Mehta said Unilever's business—which is about P30 billion a year—was projected to grow 12 percent in 2007 compared to the 3-4 percent range observed in the previous five years.

Its products include fabric cleaning and fabric care solutions, shampoo, skin care, deodorant, oral care, tea, ice cream and savory food mixes.

"Our growth rate this year means we have gained market share," Mehta said. "But (to sustain such growth), we need to further penetrate the market and make more consumers try our products."

He said that, for instance, penetration rate for the the domestic deodorant market was just 18 percent.

Unilever's roll-on and stick deodorants, which are available under the Rexona and Dove brands, were the company's biggest export earners. It is also exporting Selecta ice cream and Knorr savory food mixes.

In 2004, Unilever started exporting mini-stick deodorant to the United States in a bid to expand its overseas markets that include at least 20 countries in Central Eastern Europe and Asia.

In May of that year, the company had marked the milestone of having produced 100 million mini-sticks, 60 percent of which were shipped out of the country.

Company officials explained that the strong following of the mini-stick was due to its making the cost of deodorant affordable to consumers.

Unilever started its deodorant export program through tapping third-party manufacturers of the container and of the body odor-fighting stick.

Unilever has been in the country for 80 years.

Ronnel W. Domingo

Best annual report

Corporate Securities Info

Raul J. Palabrica

FOR THE SECOND CONSECUTIVE YEAR, MacroAsia Corp., a holding company with interests in aviation support and logistics services, won the Best Annual Report Award.

It topped this year's contest which is held annually under the auspices of the Management Association of the Philippines, BusinessWorld and Philippine Stock Exchange.

The award is the third for MacroAsia, as it was also the winner for 2002 (the first year of the contest) and 2005. Aboitiz Transport System Corp. and PLDT garnered the plum award for 2003 and 2004, respectively.

The first runner-up in this year's contest is Globe Telecom, with Manila Water Co. taking second runner-up honors.

The 71 publicly listed companies that participated in the contest were evaluated on the basis of the following criteria: compliance and disclosure (60 percent), corporate governance (30 percent) and user-friendliness (10 percent).

The compliance and disclosure criterion requires the observance of International Accounting Standards and the rules prescribed by the Securities and Exchange Commission, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and PSE in the preparation of financial statements.

Accounting rules

A premium is given to this benchmark because it is the investors' principal source of information about the financial health of a corporation.

If significant business events happen after the financial statements have been submitted, the corporations are obliged to report, within specific periods of time, those incidents to the corporation's primary regulatory agency and the PSE.

MacroAsia performed with flying colors in this criterion—3.6 percent short of a perfect score.

Except for some minor slip-ups, the corporation's financial statements complied with the prescribed accounting and disclosure standards.

The accompanying notes were systematically arranged, and appropriate references were made to the applicable accounting rules to assist the reader in appreciating the significance of the facts and figures cited.

The absence of footnotes—which was standard fare for financial statements prior to 2005—in MacroAsia's report shows its grasp of the letter and spirit of the new accounting rules.

After all, the rules were drafted to, among other reasons, do away with footnotes. The entries should be able to stand on their own without further explanation.

Corporate governance

The criterion on corporate governance aims to examine the way the board of directors and management protect and promote the interests of the corporation's stakeholders.

What measures have been adopted to ensure fairness and transparency in the treatment of stockholders and creditors?

Does the company have an effective risk management program? Is there a credible mechanism for the election of independent directors?

The Code of Corporate Governance that the SEC issued in 2002 serves as a guide in determining whether or not a corporation has lived up to the ideals of responsible and responsive management.

MacroAsia did well in this area too.

Consistent with the Code of Corporate Governance, it separated and clearly defined the duties and responsibilities of its chair and president.

The internal and external audit functions were made independent from each other.

Its two independent directors were appointed to the three committees that the Code considers critical to good corporate governance, namely, nomination, audit and compensation.

Pleasant reading

The criterion on user-friendliness rests on the premise that the annual report is only as good as it is read by its target audience.

In looking into a report's readability quotient, attention is given to its visual impact, the quality and relevance of images used, and readability.

This is an area in the preparation of annual reports that accountants and lawyers, in my opinion, play a minor role.

Not because CPAs and pañeros don't have a sense of art, but, let's admit it, numbers and legalese hardly make good background material for determining what makes a page attractive and friendly to the eyes.

MacroAsia also scored high in this criterion—0.67 percent short of a perfect 10.

Its report used a font that was easy to read. The photo illustrations had sufficient breathing space between them.

Except for the individual pictures of the key officers, the rest were action photos. There was none of the "firing squad" poses

BEST/ B8

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Mercedes-Benz

BSP to relax rules on banks' real estate lending

By Doris C. Dumlao

FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE the Asian currency crisis 10 years ago, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas is set to relax certain restrictions on real estate loans to allow banks and borrowers to benefit from an emerging property boom.

The Monetary Board has started discussions on a framework that will enable commercial banks to increase their disbursements of real estate loans without exceeding the 30-percent limit on bank's lending to this industry, BSP sources said.

This would be done by exempting from the 30-percent property limit certain items, such as socialized and low-cost housing, housing loans covered by the state-owned Housing Guaranty Corp. (HGC) and infrastructure financing.

Under the government's definition, low-cost housing refers to residential units worth below P2 million while socialized housing refers to those worth P300,000 and below.

The 30 percent limit on exposure in the volatile property sector was set by the BSP shortly before the Asian currency crisis erupted, after banking regulators found evidence that banks were becoming speculative on their real estate exposure. At that time, commercial banks were required to observe an aggregate limit on real estate loans of not more than 30 percent of their respective total loan portfolio, including loans not exceeding P3.5 million to finance the acquisition or improvement of residential units.

With the proposed exemption from the aggregate industry limit, BSP sources said banks could now increase real estate lending while sticking to prudential limits.

Based on the BSP's latest data, the banking system's average loan exposure in the real estate sector amounted to P179.7 billion or only about 10 percent of the industry's loan portfolio (without inter-bank loans) of P1.65 trillion.

Counted as part of real estate loans at present were funds released for the acquisition of residential property land and individual units, purchase of commercial property, development of subdivision for housing, industrial park, commercial property, memorial park, office or residential condominium and construction of infrastructure project.

In a separate interview, BSP Deputy Governor for bank supervision and examina-

BSP/B9

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ACE SAATCHI & SAATCHI NAMES MATT SEDDON NEW PRESIDENT AND CEO

Successful "Turnaround Man" Rejoins Saatchi After Stint as Vice Chairman of JWT Philippines

Arthur S. Young Jr, Chairman of Ace Saatchi & Saatchi today announced the appointment of Matt Seddon as the agency's new President and CEO. With more than 15 years spent in Asia building leading agency franchises, and turning around ailing offices across Southeast Asia, Mr. Seddon is expected to accelerate the revitalization and new growth of the Philippines' oldest advertising house.

"Matt's joining us is a transformational hire - he's brought success and awards to his previous jobs and has built a reputation as a turnaround expert. We have every expectation that he'll empower and enable Ace Saatchi & Saatchi to become the Philippines' No. 1 advertising agency once again," said Mr. Young.

Prior to joining Ace Saatchi & Saachi, Mr. Seddon was Vice Chairman of JWT Philippines and CEO of Saatchi & Saatchi Malaysia. In both stints, Mr. Seddon was credited with improving agency profitability and increasing each offices' ability to win national and international creative awards. Mr. Seddon also built the Saatchi & Saatchi Vietnam office from the ground up.

"I'm thrilled to join the Ace Saatchi & Saatchi team, and to come home to the Saatchi network. The Saatchi name is still the gold standard in advertising and we're going to make the Manila office glitter. Arthur and his new team have done an impressive job of transforming Ace Saatchi & Saatchi and winning significant new business for the agency and I'm excited to help drive this transformation and new growth further," concluded Seddon.

Task force set up to assist fishermen in Cebu

By Amy R. Remo

THE NATIONAL AGRICULTURE AND FISHeries Council Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture passed on Wednesday a resolution creating a task force that will prepare a compensation package for fishermen affected by a fishing ban in Cebu.

Last Nov. 15, the Department of Energy imposed a temporary fishing ban in an area reserved for oil and gas exploratory drilling activities of Japan Petroleum Exploration Co. within 7 square kilometers in the Tañon Strait.

Estimated to remain in force for two months, the ban is expected to affect 1,500 fishermen in the municipalities of Aloguinsan and Pinamungajan in Cebu, which have an aggregate fishing revenue of about P95 million per year.

In a statement, nongovernment organization Tambuyog Development Center said the task force, which has yet to be named, would come up with a just compensation package based on fishing-income studies done by both the government and NGOs.

The task force is chaired by Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources assistant director for administrative service Benjamin Tabios with the following as members: Tambuyog executive director Arsenio Tanchuling; Agriwatch chair and former Agriculture Undersecretary Ernesto Ordoñez; representatives from the environment and energy departments; and Arvin Donan, a fisherfolk representative from Pinamungajan.

Tambuyog said the task force would present the proposed compensation package to the affected fishermen, the DOE and Japex for approval.

It said the task force was also expected to convince the parties to agree on the proposed compensation package.

Currently, Japex had provided only one sack of rice to each registered fisherfolk in the affected area as disturbance compensation.

However, Tanchuling said the opportunity cost of a two-month fishing ban should amount roughly to P16 million, or about P10,600 for every fisherman, given the aggregate revenue of the two affected municipalities.

He also pointed out that the amount did not yet take into account the cost that would ensue from accidents like oil spills from the exploration site.

"We must finish our work soon, because it would add insult to injury if we delay giving the fishermen just compensation for a fishing ban that had already denied them their primary means of livelihood for two months," said Tanchuling.

Pinamungajan fishers and Sumilao farmers

By Ernesto M. Ordoñez

COMMENTARY

THE PINAMUNGAJAN FISHERS and Sumilao farmers have something in common.

In their quest for justice, they rejected terrorism and violence. Instead, they chose the path of peace and legal procedures, which the Alyansa Agrikultura has long advocated.

When the normal process fails, nonviolent innovative and creative ways should be tried. When even these fail, the temptation to resort to violence escalates.

It is therefore imperative that government reacts responsively to these initiatives. Otherwise, all sides will be harmed in the conflict, with everybody losing.

Oil and gas exploration

In our Nov. 30 commentary, "Letters, not Bombs," it was reported that the Pinamungajan Cebu fishers decided in their Nov. 28 meeting that they would use peaceful means ("letters") rather than violence ("bombs") to resolve what they considered a great injustice to them.

The issue arose because 1,200 fishers, who had been banned from fishing in an area reserved for oil and gas exploratory drilling, were entitled to only a sack of rice (worth P1,000) a month to make up for the income they lost as a result of the ban.

The two estimates of the average monthly income are P7,695 from a municipal survey (partly funded by a prestigious international organization), and P5,300 from Tambuyog Development Center (TDC). But whether it is P7,695 or P5,300, the P1,000 sack of rice is clearly unjust compensation. It is not enough for a fisher's family to survive on for a whole month.

But there is good news.

Despite the suggestions of some fishers to resort to violence, the peaceful path was chosen. It has produced promising results.

With letters and intensive follow-ups by Arben Donan, chair of the Pinamungajan Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Council (PFARMC), a meeting was conducted last Dec. 12 by the National Agriculture and Fisheries Council (NAFC) Committee on Aquaculture and Fisheries.

Led by Dr. Enrique Carlos from the private sector and ably assisted by Liza Barile and Sarah Bales from the Department of Agriculture, the committee heard Donan's plea for justice for the displaced fishers.

A Department of Energy (DOE) official present at the meeting suggested that there was really no displacement of fisherfolk. He said that in the past, there were fishers in other situations who had not told the truth and had asked for compensation they did not deserve.

That this may be the case in Pinamungajan was hotly contested by Donan.

Task force

To his credit, the DOE official agreed to look more closely into this situation. The NAFC committee unanimously voted to uphold the principle of just compensation for displaced fishers, and created a task force headed by Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) Assistant Director Benjamin Tabios.

Initially, TDC's Sonny Batungbacal rejected this proposal: "The affected fishers have been going hungry for one month already, and the task force may take months before it takes action."

However, he withdrew his objection when Tabios said the task force would not reinvent the wheel, and would instead thoroughly review the two surveys that had already been conducted. If found valid, action would immediately be taken.

Sumilao farmers option

Donan engaged the government in a possible win-win solution. Though initially disheartened by the initial government insensitivity and neglect of their plight, the fishers chose the peaceful way and may soon get justice.

The creation of the task force may result in a double victory: A win for the fishers because they will get just compensation, and a win for the nation because we will get a chance to discover the oil and gas we badly need.

Similarly, the option of a team effort with the Sumilao farmers as crucial partners should be explored. In the past, San Miguel Corp. has benefited many corn farmers by giving them higher and more stable prices because of its processing facilities. These facilities were in the original plan for Sumilao.

The Sumilao farmers should, of course, get justice. But in addition, like the Pinamungajan fishers, they should also consider proposing and participating in a nonviolent win-win solution.

A creative arrangement can be made for the agro-industrial park to still be created for the Sumilao farmers, as originally envisioned and approved. This will be for the benefit not only of the directly affected farmers, but also for the other farmers in the area. The result will be a win-win situation for the nation as a whole.

(The author is the chair of Agriwatch, former secretary for Presidential Flagship Programs and Projects, and former undersecretary for agriculture, and trade and industry. For inquiries and suggestions, e-mail agriwatchphil@yahoo.com or telefax (02) 8522112.)

SE Asia seen to sustain robust growth into '08

RP expected to gain from trade, consumption

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK EXpects the Philippines and the rest of Southeast Asia to sustain their robust economic performance well into 2008, despite a weak environment caused by volatile global financial markets and rising oil prices.

"The four largest Asean economies—currently in the upswing phase of their business cycles—are forecast to maintain strong growth in 2008, with Indonesia and Thailand accelerating, Malaysia maintaining this year's pace, and the Philippines slowing somewhat from a strong 2007," the ADB said, in its semi-annual Asia Economic Monitor, which reviews emerging East Asia.

The ADB said strong domestic demand and resilient exports would likely keep the four middle-income Asean countries in good stead next year.

"In the Philippines, GDP (gross domestic product) growth will remain high at about 6.4 percent in 2008—although off the post-crisis peak reached this year—on strong gains in net exports, private consumption, and government spending," ADB said.

It noted that in Indonesia, GDP growth continues to accelerate, after exceeding 6 percent in 2007 for the first time since the Asian financial crisis due to buoyant consumption and strong investment on the back of easier monetary policy.

In Malaysia, the ADB said an improving electronics exports would support relatively strong growth while the impact of fiscal stimulus on domestic demand gradually fades.

On the other hand, it noted that while Thailand's economy continued to struggle amid ongoing political and policy uncertainties, there was substantial scope for expansionary policies—which can boost GDP growth in 2008—once the December national elections had reduced political uncertainty.

"The external environment for emerging East Asian economies is expected to weaken somewhat in 2008, as economic growth in industrial countries moderates, oil and commodity prices remain elevated, and global financial markets continue to exhibit heightened volatility," the report said.

East Asia covers the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations; the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, South Korea and Taiwan.

With the external environment weakening somewhat and the region's largest economy China expected to soften next year, the ADB said aggregate GDP growth in emerging East Asia was forecast to slow to 8 percent in 2008 from a likely 8.5 percent this year.

"The region's economic outlook is subject to greater downside risks now than just a few months ago—including the possibility of a US hard landing, further tightening of global credit, an abrupt adjustment in exchange rates, and a continued rise in oil and commodity prices," it said.

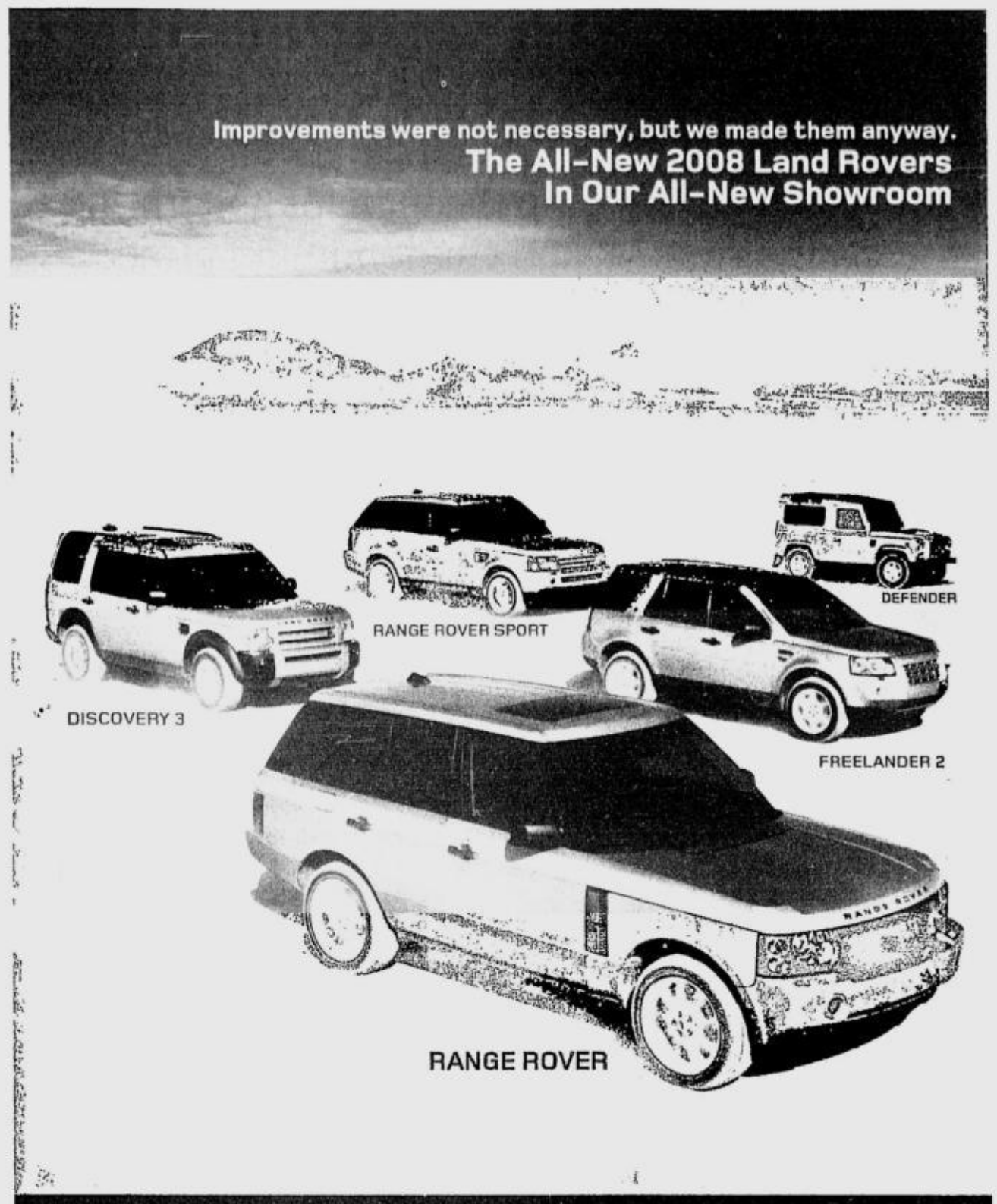
Despite strong resilience to the weakening external environment, the ADB said vulnerabilities in the region's financial systems should not be underestimated, as resurgent capital inflows and excess liquidity may complicate a true assessment of risk.

"The region's largely bank-dominated financial systems—with weak systemic support for effective risk management—leave doors open to potential spillovers if conditions in global financial markets worsen or investor sentiment shifts," the bank warned.

It added that recent trends in the global financial system—notably the growing presence of nonbank financial institutions and proliferation of new instruments for risk transfer—would also become increasingly relevant in the regional context.

A monetary policy anchored on inflation targeting, a prudent fiscal approach, and greater exchange rate flexibility could limit any spillover of continued global financial instability, it said.

"Policymakers will need to concentrate on enhancing risk management systems, strengthening disclosure requirements, and upgrading supervisory frameworks to better assess potential vulnerabilities," it said.



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FACT NO. 1: MATTERS RELATING TO ISSUANCE OF PERMIT TO SELL BY THE SEC

ON DECEMBER 10, 2007, THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION (SEC) ISSUED ORIENTAL PENINSULA RESOURCES GROUP, INC. ("ORIENTAL PENINSULA") PERMIT TO SELL SECURITIES AFTER FINDING THAT ORIENTAL PENINSULA HAS FULLY DISCLOSED ALL MATERIAL INFORMATION RELATING TO ITS IPO AND AFTER DUE CONSIDERATION OF THE LETTER-COMPLAINT OF PLATINUM GROUP METALS CORPORATION (PGMC) ALLEGING INCOMPLETE AND IMPROPER DISCLOSURE IN THE PROSPECTUS OF THE PENDING CASES TO WHICH ORIENTAL PENINSULA AND ITS SUBSIDIARY CITINICKEL MINES AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION ("CITINICKEL") ARE PARTIES TO.

"THERE WERE OPPOSITIONS TO THE IPO, BUT UPON REVIEW OF THE FILINGS MADE BY ORIENTAL PENINSULA, WE FOUND THAT THE ALLEGATIONS OR ISSUES CONTAINED IN THE LETTER-COMPLAINT HAD BEEN PROPERLY DISCLOSED", SEC SPOKESPERSON GERARD LUKBAN SAID IN AN INTERVIEW.

FACT NO. 2: MATTERS RELATING TO THE APPROVAL OF THE LISTING APPLICATION

THE PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE (PSE) RECEIVED A SIMILAR LETTER COMPLAINT FROM PGMC.

PSE APPROVED THE LISTING APPLICATION ON NOVEMBER 28, 2007. THEREAFTER, PSE ALLOWED ORIENTAL PENINSULA TO COMMENCE ITS OFFER PERIOD FROM DECEMBER 10 TO DECEMBER 14 UPON RECEIPT OF THE COPY OF THE PERMIT TO SELL SECURITIES ISSUED BY THE SEC TO ORIENTAL PENINSULA AND AFTERORIENTAL PENINSULA'S COMPLIANCE WITH THE FULL DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS OF THE SEC AND PSE INCLUDING DISCLOSURES ON PENDING CASES.

FACT NO. 3: MATTERS RELATING TO THE CANCELLATION OF THE OPERATING AGREEMENT

IN DENR CASE NO 2006-02B , THE PANEL OF ARBITRATORS OF THE MINES AND GEOSCIENCES BUREAU OF THE DENR (PANEL), WHICH HAS THE EXCLUSIVE JURISDICTION OVER DISPUTES INVOLVING MINING RIGHTS, ORDERED ON OCTOBER 30, 2006 CANCELLATION OF THE OPERATING AGREEMENT BETWEEN PGMC AND OLYMPIC MINES AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (PREDECESSOR- IN INTEREST OF CITINICKEL) AND FURTHER DECLARED IT WITHOUT FORCE AND EFFECT. ON JANUARY 8, 2007, THE PANEL DECLARED THAT ITS RESOLUTION CANCELLING THE OPERATING AGREEMENT HAS ATTAINED FINALITY AND THEREFORE FINAL AND EXECUTORY. THUS, IN AN ORDER DATED APRIL 11, 2007 THE PANEL OF ARBITRATORS ORDERED PGMC TO VACATE THE MINING AREAS IN DISPUTE AND TO CEASE AND DESIST FROM CONDUCTING MINING OPERATIONS THEREIN.

ACTING ON THE FAVORABLE RECOMMENDATION OF THE MGB, THE DENR SECRETARY APPROVED CITINICKEL'S MPSA APPLICATION NO, AMA IVB-040 COVERING 2,176 HECTARES (THE "MINERAL PROPERTY") ON JANUARY 3, 2007 AND GRANTED CITINICKEL MPSA NO. 229-2007-IV-B.

AS MPSA HOLDER, CITINICKEL IS IN FULL POSSESSION OF THE MINERAL PROPERTY CONTRARY TO THE CLAIM OF PGMC. A FIELD VALIDATION WAS CONDUCTED BY THE MGB ON THE SAID MINERAL PROPERTY.

THE PSE ALSO MADE AN OCULAR INSPECTION AS PART OF THE PROCESS OF EVALUATING ORIENTAL PENINSULA'S LISTING APPLICATION.

FACT NO. 4: MATTERS RELATING TO THE DISCLOSURE OF PENDING CASES

NEITHER ORIENTAL PENINSULA NOR CITINICKEL ARE PARTIES TO CIVIL CASE 4199 FILED BY PGMC AGAINST OLYMPIC INVOLVING THE OPERATING AGREEMENT, WHICH IS STILL PENDING BEFORE BRANCH 95 OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURT OF PUERTO PRINCESA CITY.

ALL OTHER PENDING CASES TO WHICH ORIENTAL PENINSULA OR CITINICKEL IS A PARTY ARE ALL DISCLOSED IN THE INFORMATION MATERIAL OF ORIENTAL PENINSULA, SUCH AS THE IPO PROSPECTUS, WHICH HAS BEEN DULY APPROVED BY THE SEC AND THE PSE.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Megaworld's 'The Trumps' turns into 'One Central'

Firm also thanks Trump the man for generating interest in prime Makati condominium project

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

OFFICE AND RESIDENTIAL LANDlord Megaworld Corp. is preparing to launch a P5.5-billion condominium project—formerly tagged "The Trumps"—in Makati City early next year under a new brand name.

Megaworld said in a disclosure to the stock exchange that its residential tower will be dubbed "One Central," and is the most expensive residential undertaking in the country to date.

It will rise on the corner of Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue Extension and Ayala Avenue in Salcedo, Village, former site of the Shell Maya gasoline station.

Megaworld was quick to say that it is not dropping its right to use the "Trump" trademark in its future Philippine real estate projects, explaining that the word simply means "to excel, surpass or outdo."

"In opting to use 'One Central,' we are by no means relinquishing our right to use the mark 'The Trumps' in any of our real estate projects in the Philippines," said Megaworld chair Andrew Tan in a statement.

Megaworld has been in a legal tussle with American tycoon Donald J. Trump over the right to use the brand "The Trumps" in the Philippines.

The case is now pending before the Intellectual Property Office (IPO).

"We believe Megaworld has a strong legal position," said Tan. "But we are prepared to abide by the IPO's decision, whichever way it goes."

"We'd like to thank Mr. Trump for generating a lot of interest in 'One Central' in the last few days," he added. "We are now seriously considering launching it ahead of schedule."

Also, Tan said Megaworld takes exception to Mr. Trump's recent claim that the word "Trump" is "unmistakably associated" with Donald J. Trump and his company "throughout the world."

Megaworld cited a residential building called "The Trumps" in Singapore that is, based on its initial research, neither owned by nor connected with Trump or his company.

Tan said the firm was eyeing the high-end market for its "One Central" project.

The company has assembled a world class development team—which includes American design consultant Preben Kent and international structural consultant Ove Arup + Partners—to execute the project.

Shakey's to open 10 new stores next year

INTERNATIONAL FAMILY FOOD Services Inc. (IFFSI), the franchise holder for the Shakey's fast casual dining restaurant line in the Philippines, is set to add at least 10 stores to its network next year, company chair Leo Prieto Jr. said.

Shakey's expansion in the country would boost the restaurant ahead of other fast casual dining pizza and pasta lines, said Margaret Jose, marketing manager for IFFSI.

Jose said possible locations for the new stores in 2008 may be in Sta. Rosa, Las Piñas, Quezon City and Manila, among other sites.

The company spends on the average P9 to 12 million to put up a store depending on its size.

As part of its expansion, Shakey's yesterday launched a new concept for its 95th store, which opened yesterday on E. Rodriguez Sr., beside St. Luke's hospital in Quezon City yesterday.

The latest branch is deemed as one of the biggest branches of Shakey's, which could accommodate 200 visitors.

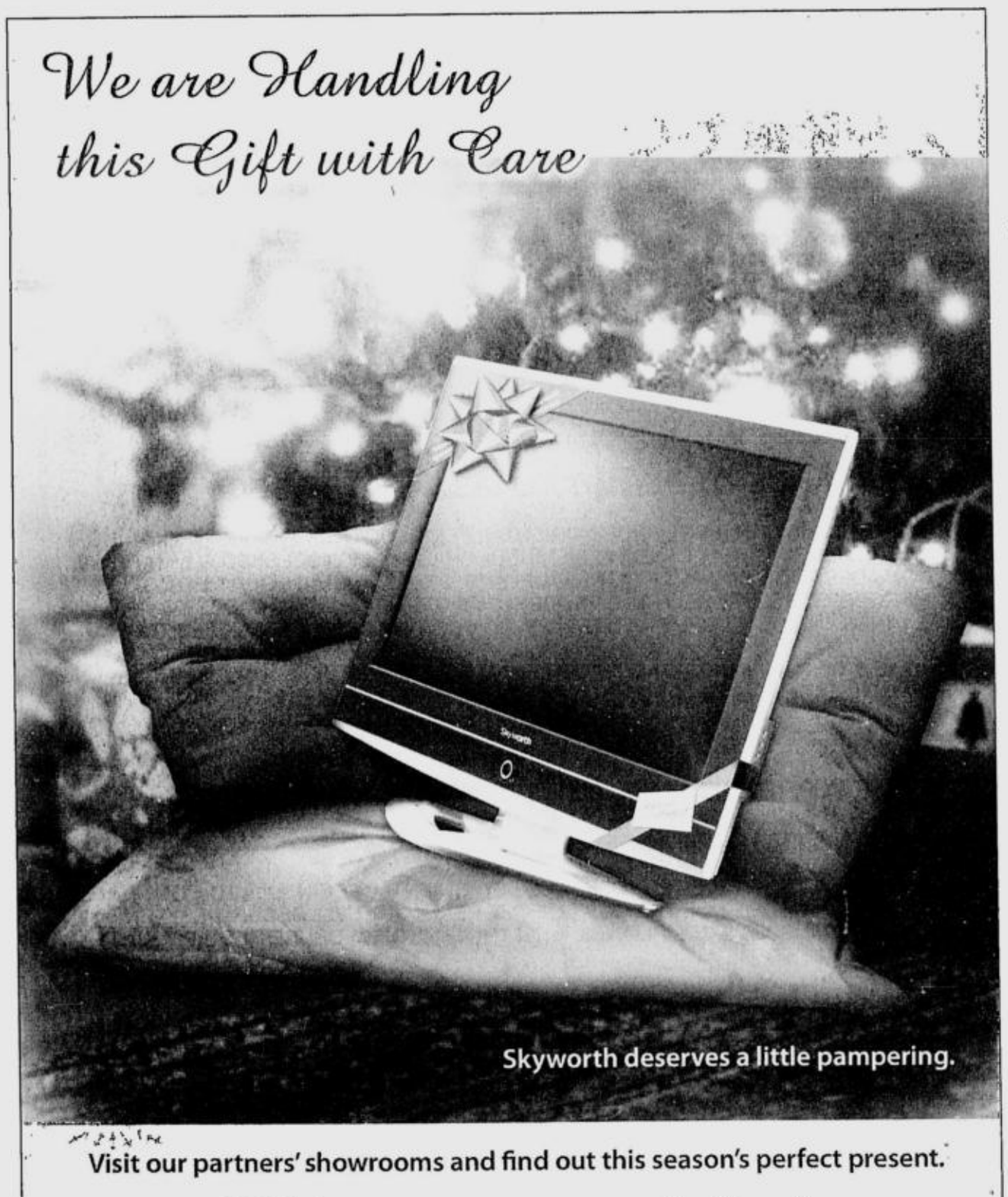
The new 400-square meter store features a "Fun Zone," an area solely dedicated to 12 imported game machines like Daytona (racing arcade games) and Air Hockey.

The restaurant is also Wi-Fi enabled to lure "techies" and "yuppies."

An average Shakey's branch measures about 150 to 200 sq. m.

Shakey's sales in October reached P1.4 billion, already exceeding its yearend sales of P1.3 billion in 2006.

Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson



PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of December 13, 2007)

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		BANKS					
17.5	6.8	Asiatrust Development Bank Inc	8.6	8.6	8.6	8.6	12,000
73	43	Banco de Oro-EPCI Inc.	60	60.5	60	60	511,800
73.5	53	Bank of the Philippine Islands	62	63	62	63	1,394,100
748	544	China Banking Corp.	655	660	650	650	4,330
40	16.52	Chinatrust (Phils.) Comm'l Banking Corp.	36	36	36	36	2,100
23.5	14	Citystate Savings Bank	23	23	23	23	100,000
0.63	0.36	Export and Industry Bank Inc.	0.39	0.39	0.38	0.39	50,000
75.5	47.5	Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co.	57	57.5	55.5	56.5	2,966,000
65.5	39	Philippine National Bank	50	50	49.5	49.5	284,600
68	47	Philippine Savings Bank	60	60	59.5	60	2,400
39.57	20.43	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	25	25.5	24.75	25	142,800
90	63.5	Security Bank Corp.	75	75	75	75	77,400
66	42	Union Bank of the Philippines	45.5	46	45	45.5	104,100
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
2.22	0.6	Bankard Inc.	1.94	1.94	1.92	1.94	190,000
16.25	4.6	CitiSecOnline.com Inc.	11.5	11.75	11.5	11.75	224,400
42.5	29	First Metro Investment Corp.	42	42	42	42	1,000
5.9	4.8	I-Remit Inc.	4.95	4.95	4.85	4.9	73,000
2.55	1.74	Makati Finance Corp.	2	2.55	2	2.55	215,000
5	2.7	National Reinsurance Corp. of the Phils.	3.35	3.35	3.25	3.25	1,362,000
3.1	1.32	PCI Leasing and Finance Inc.	1.82	1.82	1.82	1.82	101,000
1,390.00	262.5	The Philippine Stock Exchange Inc.	1,050.00	1,050.00	1,040.00	1,050.00	15,390
1.94	1.3	Wantage Corp.	1.56	1.82	1.56	1.74	18,999,000
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
6.2	3.8	Aboitiz Power Corp.	5.3	5.3	5.2	5.3	358,000
0.57	0.22	East Asia Power Resources Corp.	0.45	0.46	0.43	0.43	970,000
70.5	49	First Gen Corp.	61	61.5	61	61.5	282,300
92	58	First Phil. Holdings Corp.	73	73	72.5	72.5	67,400
18.5	8.8	Manila Water Co. Inc.	17.75	18.25	17.5	18	5,369,800
105.45	45.91	Manila Electric Co.	84	85.5	84	84.5	288,300
7.8	4.1	PNOC Energy Development Corp.	6.8	6.9	6.8	6.8	24,457,000
7.4	3.95	Petron Corp.	5.9	6.1	5.9	6.1	1,557,000
14.75	6.4	Phoenix Petroleum Philippines Inc.	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8	18,000
2.04	0.91	Trans-Asia Oil and Energy Dev't Corp.	1.3	1.34	1.3	1.32	2,396,000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
6.3	3.4	Alaska Milk Corp.	4.85	4.95	4.85	4.95	60,000
2.32	1.48	Alliance Tuna International Inc.	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.5	2,378,000
2.2	1.08	CADP Group Corp.	1.58	1.6	1.58	1.6	30,000
61	40.5	Jollibee Foods Corp.	49.5	49.5	48.5	49	256,000
0.98	0.5	RFM Corp.	0.71	0.71	0.7	0.7	130,000
3.1	2.06	Roxas Holdings	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	730,000
80	42.5	San Miguel Corp. "A"	55	59	52.5	58.5	623,900
88	43	San Miguel Corp. "B"	53.5	59.5	52.5	58.5	2,328,000
6.5	3	Tanduay Holdings Inc.	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	525,000
20.75	13.5	Universal Robina Corp.	14	14.25	14	14.25	3,402,000
0.55	0.24	Vitarich Corp.	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	60,000
		CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
40	7.3	Concrete Aggregates Corp. "A"	40	40	40	40	100
6.1	2.65	EEI Corp.	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.3	282,000
21.5	6	Federal Resources Investment Group Inc.	10.5	10.75	10.5	10.75	8,000
9.2	4.95	Holcim Philippines Inc.	7.9	8	7.9	8	300,000
7	3.65	Republic Cement Corp.	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	270,000
2	0.81	Southeast Asia Cement Holdings Inc.	1.02	1.04	1	1.02	489,000
23	2.12	TKC Steel Corp.	9.2	9.2	9	9.1	170,000
		CHEMICALS					
6.3	3.75	Chemrez Technologies Inc.	4.15	4.15	4.15	4.15	236,000
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
0.75	0.175	Picop Resources Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	3,720,000
9	6.2	Splash Corp.	8.1	8.4	8.1	8.2	6,947,000
		HOLDING FIRMS					
39	18.75	ABS-CBN Holdings Corp.-PDR	34	34	34	34	54,000
3.9	2.7	A. Soriano Corp.	3.45	3.45	3.45	3.45	64,000
0.185	0.0575	AJO.net Holdings Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.125	0.125	58,280,000
1.28	0.3	APC Group Inc.	0.62	0.65	0.62	0.63	3,010,000
3.65	1.5	ATN Holdings Inc. "A"	2.42	2.48	2.42	2.48	45,000
0.018	0.0075	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. "A"	0.01	0.011	0.01	0.01	15,000,000
9.7	5.8	Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc.	7	7.1	7	7	3,911,000
0.021	0.0095	Alcorn Gold Resources Corp.	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	17,100,000
7.3	3.5	Alliance Global Group Inc.	5.3	5.3	5.2	5.3	1,627,000
1.38	0.6	Alsons Consolidated Resources Inc.	0.83	0.83	0.81	0.81	300,000
2.9	0.93	Anglo-Philippine Holdings Corp.	2.4	2.4	2.36	2.38	554,000
16	4.5	Atok-Big Wedge Co. Inc. "A"	9	9	9	9	1,000
645	400	Ayala Corp.	575	575	565	565	156,750
5.8	2.12	Benpres Holdings Corp.	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.25	1,228,000
12	5.6	DMCI Holdings Inc.	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.5	985,000
8	3.5	Filinvest Development Corp.	6.2	6.4	6.2	6.4	398,000
3.55	1.76	House of Investments Inc.	2	2	2	2	52,000
14.5	8.9	JG Summit Holdings Inc.	10.5	10.5	10.25	10.25	514,200
28	1.42	Lodestar Investment Hldgs Corp.	19	19	19	19	17,000
0.8	0.24	MEDCO Holdings Inc.	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.54	20,000
11.5	1.5	Minerales Industrias Corp.	7	7.1	6.8	6.9	1,601,000
0.28	0.016	Pacifica Inc. "A"	0.235	0.235	0.23	0.235	38,090,000
1.54	0.62	Prime Media Holdings Inc.	0.62	0.62	0.62	0.62	70,000
0.75	0.19	Prime Orion Philippines Inc.	0.54	0.56	0.54	0.54	1,400,000
2.1	1.3	Republic Glass Holdings Corp.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	8,000
452.5	282.92	SM Investments Corp.	347.5	352.5	347.5	350	887,930
2.1	1.08	Seafront Resources Corp.	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	72,000
0.73	0.15	Sinophil Corp.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	2,800,000
0.75	0.12	Weiler Industries Inc.	0.3	0.31	0.3	0.31	2,600,000
		PROPERTY					
2.34	1	A Brown Co. Inc.	2.12	2.12	2.06	2.12	14,316,000
8.9	5	Anchor Land Holdings Inc.	7.1	7.4	7.1	7.4	87,000
19.25	12.08	Ayala Land Inc.	15.75	15.75	15.5	15.5	48,776,500
1.88	1	Belle Corp.	1.22	1.22	1.2	1.2	1,200,000
2.7	1.25	Cityland Development Corp.	1.62	1.62	1.6	1.6	100,000
0.83	0.24	Cyber Bay Corp.	0.4	0.42	0.4	0.41	4,800,000
0.99	0.53	Empire East Land Holdings Inc.	0.85	0.87	0.85	0.85	42,830,000
6.9	1.1	Eton Properties Philippines Inc.	4	4	4	4	55,000
0.47	0.0575	Ever Gotesco Resources and Hold'gs Inc.	0.245	0.245	0.24	0.24	1,510,000
1.48	0.61	Fil-Estate Land Inc.	1	1	1	1	520,000
2.44	1.32	Filinvest Land Inc.	1.46	1.48	1.42	1.44	43,003,000
0.49	0.11	Gotesco Land Inc. "A"	0.24	0.28	0.24	0.28	300,000
1.12	0.31	MRC Allied Industries Inc.	0.61	0.61	0.6	0.61	510,000
4.6	2.2	Megaworld Corp.	3.85	4	3.85	4	22,099,000
6.4	1.5	Metro Pacific Investments Corp.	4.3	4.3	4.15	4.2	769,000
5.2	2.2	Metro Pacific Investments Corp.-Warrants	2.5	2.7	2.5	2.7	119,000
0.7	0.135	Phil. Estates Corp.	0.34	0.35	0.34	0.35	6,010,000
0.86	0.32	Philippine Realty and Holdings Corp.	0.59	0.6	0.54	0.55	74,500,000
9.2	1.7	Polar Property Holdings Corp.	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	40,000
23	14.5	Robinson Land Corp.	16.5	16.5	16.25	16.5	5,836,200
5.9	2	SM Development Corp.	3.95	3.95	3.95	3.95	364,000
13.5	7.84	SM Prime Holdings Inc.	10.25	10.75	10.25	10.75	14,669,400
3.25	1.5	Shang Properties Inc.	2.18	2.22	2.18	2.22	451,000
4.5	0.38	Sta. Lucia Land Inc.	2.02	2.04	2	2.02	956,000
1.34	0.46	Suntrust Home Developers Inc.	0.68	0.68	0.67	0.67	860,000
7.5	3.65	Vista Land and Lifescapes Inc.	5.8	5.9	5.7	5.9	10,953,000
		MEDIA					
38.5	18.75	ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	33.5	33.5	33.5	33.5	8,700
12	7.6	GMA Holdings Inc.	8.2	8.4	8.2	8.3	2,013,000
11.75	7.5	GMA Network Inc.	8	8.1	8	8	33,000
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
2.12	1.1	Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc.	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	1,395,000
1,750.00	1,180.00	Globe Telecom Inc.	1,520.00	1,520.00	1,500.00	1,500.00	86,170
3,285.00	2,250.00	Phil. Long Distance Telephone Co.	3,030.00	3,080.00	3,025.00	3,045.00	158,600
8.1	5.5	Pilipino Telephone Corp.	7	7.1	7	7	5,274,000
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
15.75	2.1	Diversified Financial Network Inc.	15.25	15.25	14	14	2,305,500
11.5	3.55	IPVG Corp.	8	8.2	7.8	8.2	363,000
0.065	0.027	ISM Communications Corp.	0.039	0.039	0.038	0.039	6,200,000
5	1.62	Information Capital Tech. Ventures Inc.	3	3	3	3	7,000
2.9	1.1	Ionics Inc.	1.68	1.68	1.68	1.68	75,000
0.32	0.05	Island Information and Technology Inc.	0.18	0.185	0.18	0.18	4,530,000
2.24	1.1	Music Semiconductors Corp.	2.02	2.22	2.02	2.22	7,269,000
0.0725	0.03	Philweb Corp.	0.047	0.048	0.046	0.047	47,700,000
5.4	1.64	Transpacific Broadband Group Int'l. Inc.	2.55	2.55	2.5	2.55	1,616,000
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
2.14	1.2	Aboitiz Transport System Corp.	1.26	1.26	1.24	1.24	294,000
6.8	3.6	Asian Terminals Inc.	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	200,000
49	18.75	Int'l Container Terminal Services Inc.	45	45.5	45	45	462,500
2.16	0.93	Keppel Philippines Marine Inc.	1.98	1.98	1.98	1.98	50,000
2.7	1.12	Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.56	1.58	1.56	1.58	40,000
		HOTEL & LEISURE					
16.5	5	Acesite (Phils.) Hotel Corp.	8.9	10	8.9	10	70,000
4.25	1.8	Leisure and Resorts World Corp.	2.46	2.65	2.46	2.55	2,449,000
1.52	0.33	Premiere Entertainment Productions Inc.	1.38	1.42	1.36	1.36	3,133,000
1.2	0.55	Waterfront Philippines Inc.	0.86	0.88	0.86	0.86	1,910,000
		EDUCATION					
950	650	Far Eastern University Inc.	805	805	805	805	150
3.7	2.6	iPeople Inc.	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15	80,000
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
43	6.6	JTH Davies Holdings Inc.	30	30	29	29.5	8,100
6	2.04	Macroasia Corp.	4.6	4.7	4.6	4.7	337,000
17.25	9.8	Pacific Online Systems Corp.	11.25	11.25	11	11	57,000
30	6.2	Paxys Inc.	6.4	6.4	6.2	6.3	122,000
472.5	380	eTelecare Global Solutions Inc.	387.5	390	380	390	10,500
		MINING					
0.017	0.0085	Abra Mining and Industrial Corp.	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	45,000,000
7.2	3.6	Apex Mining Co. Inc. "A"	6.3	6.3	6.2	6.3	100,000
7.4	3.85	Apex Mining Co. Inc. "B"	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7	29,000
21.25	8.1	Atlas Cons. Mining and Dev't Corp.	13.5	13.5	13.25	13.5	307,700
20.75	8.9	Benguet Corp. "A"	20.25	20.75	19.75	20	478,900
35	24	Benguet Corp. "B"	26	26	26	26	5,000
12.75	1.98	Dizon Copper Silver Mines Inc.	9.8	9.8	9.5	9.5	191,000
3.1	0.6	GEOGRACE Resources Philippines Inc.	2.08	2.1	2.02	2.02	29,922,000
0.56	0.18	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. "A"	0.52	0.52	0.5	0.51	14,300,000
0.61	0.22	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. "B"	0.56	0.56	0.54	0.54	14,250,000
0.038	0.017	Manila Mining Corp. "A"	0.028	0.029	0.028	0.028	233,500,000
30	3.6	NIHAO Minerals Resources Int'l Inc.	22	22	21	21.25	345,300
0.021	0.0088	Omico Corp.	0.013	0.014	0.013	0.014	42,500,000
11.25	3.5	Philex Mining Corp.	9.7	9.8	9.7	9.8	8,001,000
49.5	14.75	Semirara Mining Corp.	42.5	43	42.5	43	22,073,300
1.36	0.65	United Paragon Mining Corp.	0.72	0.73	0.72	0.73	1,460,000
1.8	0.99	Vulcan Industrial and Mining Corp.	1.12	1.12	1.1	1.1	300,000
		OIL					
0.56	0.27	Basic Energy Corp.	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.31	320,000
0.029	0.01	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. "A"	0.024	0.024	0.024	0.024	93,300,000
0.03	0.011	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. "B"	0.027	0.027	0.025	0.025	43,900,000
13.75	9	Petroenergy Resources Corp.	10	10	10	10	2,000
0.032	0.0097	The Philodrill Corp.	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.029	203,900,000

	AVERAGES		VOLUME	VALUE
Financial	870.68 UP	6.28	26,617,420	375,367,575.00
Industrial	4,465.43 UP	60.60	58,678,800	626,152,490.00
Holding Firms	2,038.10 DOWN	2.74	150,791,880	490,716,855.00
Property	1,564.47 UP	8.09	295,515,100	1,346,484,385.00
Service	1,831.10 UP	4.52	86,242,220	752,275,130.00
Mining & Oil	8,463.03 UP	58.18	754,185,200	1,145,699,695.00
All Shares Index	2,221.48 UP	14.11		
PSEI	3,626.21 UP	20.62		
		GRAND TOTALS	1,372,030,620	4,736,696,130.00

COMPILED BY SCHATZI QUODALA, INQUIRER RESEARCH

SOURCE: TECHNISTOCK, PSE

IFC open to financing rehab of hydro plants

By Abigail L. Ho

INTERNATIONAL FINANCE CORP., THE private sector arm of the World Bank, is willing to help finance SN Aboitiz Power Hydro Inc.'s (SNAP Hydro) acquisition of the 175-megawatt (MW) Ambuklao-Binga hydropower plant package.

Jesse Ang, IFC acting country manager for the Philippines and Thailand, said the bank, if invited by the Aboitiz-led consortium, would look into the project.

"As for the timing, it is based on Aboitiz and SN Power. We will strive to comply with the company's timetable, which we have shown to be capable of in the Magat deal," Ang said in a statement.

IFC was one of the lenders that the Aboitiz group tapped to help refinance its acquisition of the 360-MW Magat hydropower plant package earlier this year.

In an earlier interview, SNAP president Luis Miguel Aboitiz had said the consortium composed of Manila-Oslo Renewable Enterprise Inc. and SN Power Holding Singapore Pte Ltd., planned to "fix up" the Ambuklao plant to make it run again and produce at least 65 MW of power.

"PSALM (Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp.) wants us to fix it. There's no firm investment figure yet, but it'll be cheaper than putting up a new plant since the storehouse is already there and the plant itself. We just need to buy some mechanical equipment and do some construction," he said.

Ambuklao's three 25-MW generating units have not been operating since 2000 because the plant needs to be rehabilitated and repaired to run properly.

As for the 100-MW Binga plant, Aboitiz said the SNAP Hydro consortium planned to expand it by putting in new turbines that would enable the plant to run more efficiently.

SNAP Hydro has 540 days from the award of the sale contract to remit 40 percent of the bid price to PSALM. The balance would be payable over seven years.

CURRENCIES

December 13, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.679948	1.000000	41.4020
Japan	Yen	0.006061	0.008914	0.3691
United Kingdom	Pound	1.391922	2.047100	84.7540
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.087200	0.128245	5.3096
Switzerland	Franc	0.599338	0.881446	36.4936
Canada	Dollar	0.670957	0.986777	40.8545
Singapore	Dollar	0.471433	0.693337	28.7055
Australia	Dollar	0.602044	0.885426	36.6584
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.815616	2.670227	110.5527
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.181800	0.267373	11.0698
Brunei	Dollar	0.469805	0.690942	28.6064
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000073	0.000108	0.0045
Thailand	Baht	0.022493	0.033080	1.3696
UAE	Dirham	0.185221	0.272405	11.2781
EU	Euro	1.000000	1.470700	60.8899
Korea	Won	0.000734	0.001080	0.0447
China	Yuan**	0.092171	0.135556	5.6123
Denmark	Kroner	0.134035	0.197126	8.1614
India	Rupee	0.017292	0.025432	1.0529
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.205113	0.301659	12.4893
New Zealand	Dollar	0.535984	0.788271	32.6360
Sweden	Kroner	0.106038	0.155950	6.4566
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.021019	0.030912	1.2798

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY time—Dec. 12, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian time closing rate as of Dec. 12, 2007

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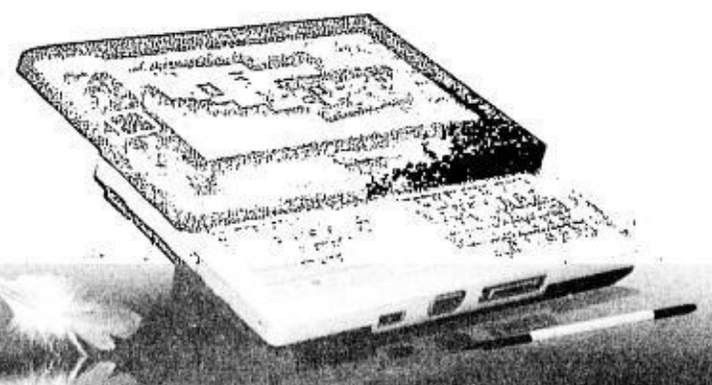

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- 80GB Hard Drive
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- Intel 3945ABG WIFI
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Tanduay gets Victorias stake

Tan group now controls about 21% of sugar mill

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

LIQUOR COMPANY TANDUAY Holdings Inc. of taipan Lucio Tan has won the bidding for a 10.7-percent stake in Victorias Milling Corp.

Tanduay is buying the shares for P85 million.

This has beefed up the Tan group's stake in the country's largest sugar manufacturer to about 21 percent.

In a disclosure to the stock exchange, Victorias information officer Eva Vicencio Rodriguez said VMC Retirement Committee chair Abelardo Bugay informed Tanduay that it had been awarded the 170.13 million shares owned by the Miguel J. Ossorio Pension Foundation Inc.

Victorias chair Omar Mier said in a telephone interview that Philippine National Bank, also owned by Tan, held 10.6 percent of the sugar mill.

With the additional 10.6 percent of Tanduay, the Tan Group's stake would increase to about 21 percent, representing two board seats.

The latest acquisition made the Tan group the single biggest shareholder of the sugar mill.

In 2003, Tanduay also extended a five-year loan of P300 million to Victorias at very low interest to enable it to start its rehabilitation program.

It was given the option to convert the loan into equity from the third year from April 8, 2003 at a conversion rate of one common share for each P1 of principal debt. So far, it has not exercised that option. If it does so, it will gain another 15.8 percent of Victorias.

In 1995, Victorias started suffering from serious financial problems as a result of increased foreign and local competition and of losses arising from unprofitable nonsugar ventures. It failed to settle its debts and sought rehabilitation.

Peso seen breaking ... From page B1

The peso is now trading at its strongest level since touching 41.08 on April 11, 2000. It has likewise appreciated by 19 percent against the dollar this year, making it the best performing Asian currency.

"The peso might hit 40.80 next week but there might be a healthy correction because the US dollar is hitting oversold levels," Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. senior vice president Marcelo Ayes said.

He said the correction might reach up to 41.60 but any dollar rebound would simply be an opportunity to sell the greenback.

Volume traded at the spot foreign exchange market reached $520.14 million as against the previous day's $622.3 million.

Currency traders said the peso was supported by a strong season of overseas remittances as well as an upbeat regional currency market.

After a 25-basis-point cut disappointed financial markets earlier this week, the US Federal Reserve recently opened a short-term lending facility to ease the credit crunch caused by the property downturn in the world's biggest economy. This intervention was matched by market-soothing initiatives by its counterpart central banks in Europe, Canada and Britain.

Meanwhile, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported that net foreign inflows of "hot" money or those invested in local stocks, bonds and money market instruments thinned to $51.2 million in November, slower than the $223 million in the same month a year ago.

However, total net inflows for the January-to-November period amounted to $3.7 billion, nearly double the $2.1 billion windfall in the same 11-month period last year.

BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said the net inflows in November was due to the 25-basis point reduction in the BSP's overnight borrowing rates (which attracted more funds to the stock market), the 6.6-percent domestic economic growth posted in the third quarter and reports of strong third-quarter corporate earnings.

"The size of the net inflow was, however, markedly lower than October's $274.1 million due to concerns on the widening global credit crunch sparked by the subprime mortgage crisis in the US, soaring oil prices, unfavorable outlook for the American economy as well as the Batasan and Makati incidents," Tetangco said.

The BSP chief was referring to the fatal bombing in Congress as well as the explosion in the Glorietta mall.

But Tetangco said the country's generally sound economic fundamentals helped sustain strong foreign investor interest for the 11-month period.

Shares close 0.6% ... From page B1

But investors were reluctant to make big moves following Wall Street's volatile performance despite the Fed's latest move to combat the global credit crunch.

The Fed on Wednesday announced it had agreed with the European Central Bank and the central banks of several European countries, to create a temporary auction facility to supply funds to banks and set up credit lines with the European and Swiss central banks for additional resources.

"Investors are still digesting the Fed's move because, while positive, they can't be certain how effective the move will be," said Ron Rodrigo of DBP Daiwa Securities. "It also reinforces perceptions that the subprime and credit problems are just getting bigger ... it's not altogether very comforting to investors." *AFP*

Gov't to cut charges ...

From page B1

A group of exporters earlier said the appreciating peso was to blame for the slower-than-target growth in the country's exports. Some even asked the government to peg the peso at 47 to a dollar and prevent their income from dwindling further.

But the government said that a market-determined exchange rate was still its policy.

Exports grew 5.4 percent to $41.85 billion in the first 10 months of the year—just about half the government's full-year exports growth target of 11 percent.

The DOF also said the national government's borrowing program for 2008 had been changed to temper the rising peso.

Originally, the government intended to observe for next year a borrowing mix of 64:36, with the larger share of the loans to be sourced from domestic lenders and investors, while the smaller share to be borrowed from foreign ones.

But the DOF said the borrowing mix was revised to become 70:30 still in favor of domestic sources. This translates to domestic borrowings of P240.7 billion and foreign borrowings of P105.4 billion.

Increasing the share of domestic loans to the total borrowing requirement eases the buildup of the country's dollar holdings, preventing the peso from rising further.

The faster-than-expected rise of the peso was partly attributed to the entry of dollars into the country in the form of remittances and foreign investments.

The revised borrowing mix is now up for approval by the interagency Development Budget Coordination Committee, which sets the government's economic targets and fiscal program, the DOF said.

Best annual report

From page B2

characteristic of social events.

I particularly liked MacroAsia's portrayal of its labor force. It was refreshing to see preteens wearing the uniforms of pilots, flight stewards, cooks and maintenance personnel.

One final note. There was one thing that stood out in the annual reports I was privileged to review: They were all strong and passionate about corporate social responsibility.

Their CSR activities include giving financial support to the communities they operate in, sponsoring skills training programs for out-of-school youth, and assisting victims of natural and man-made calamities.

Big Business, after all, can have a heart if it wants to.

(For feedback, please write to <rpalabrica@inquirer.com.ph>.)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National/Citizenship	Position
MITSUI & CO. LTD. (MANILA BRANCH) 36/F GT Tower International, 6815 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Mitsuru Kageyama Japanese	General Manager
VENUS COSMECEUTIC CORPORATION Unit B 29/F Ayala Life FGU Center Bldg., 6811 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Anton Edward Ramsay Finnish	Marketing Manager
VENUS COSMECEUTIC CORPORATION Unit B 29/F Ayala Life FGU Center Bldg., 6811 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Chanlan Kim Korean	Human Resource Manager
KOZY HOUSE CAFE & ENTERTAINMENT, INC. 1707 M. Adriatico St., Malate, Manila	Cheng-Jie Liu Chinese	General Manager
ORIENTAL HENG HAO MINING CORP. 137 Talayan St., Talayan Village, Quezon City	Liping Wei Chinese	Office Manager
ORIENTAL HENG HAO MINING CORP. 137 Talayan St., Talayan Village, Quezon City	Chunyuan Wang Chinese	Export Manager
ORIENTAL HENG HAO MINING CORP. 137 Talayan St., Talayan Village, Quezon City	Xingming Luo Chinese	Technical Consultant
ORIENTAL HENG HAO MINING CORP. 137 Talayan St., Talayan Village, Quezon City	Baofu Yang Chinese	Chinese-Language Administrative Assistant
JUST IN CASE SVCS CORP. Globe Telecom Plaza 1, Unit 615 Pioneer cor. Madison St., Mandaluyong City	Yushin Kim Korean	Account Executive
1001 TRADING INT'L CORP. Unit 901 Medical Plaza, San Miguel Ave., Ortigas Ctr., Pasig City	Jin Heo Korean	General Manager
EVERGREEN SHIPPING AGENCY PHILIPPINES CORPORATION 6/F Equitable Bank Tower, 8751 Paseo de Roxas St., Makati City	Shih-Ming Chiu Taiwanese	Executive Vice President for General Operations
TELUS INTERNATIONAL PHILIPPINES, INC. 31/F Discovery Center, 25 ADB Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Warren Paddison Tait Canadian	VP Operations-TI
NEUNGYULE EDUPHONE, INC. 3/F IBM Bldg., 8 Eastwood City., Bagumbayan, Libis, Quezon City	Seokjin Youn Korean	Korean Language Support Representative
RAKSO PROPERTIES & INVESTMENTS, INC. 3/F Ricogen Bldg.,112 Aguirre St., Legaspi Village, Makati City	Sungjin An Korean	Project Manager
ROCHE (PHILIPPINES) INC. 2252 Chino Roces Ave., Makati City	Augusto Roberto Villanueva Canadian	President and General Manager
RAKSO COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY, INC. 112 Aguirre St., Legaspi Village, Makati City	Sun Ho Jeo Korean	Design Manager
KUKJE DEA YOUNG INTERNATIONAL MARKETING CORP. 8264 Dr. A. Santos Ave., San Isidro, Paranaque City	Myong Sook Park (w/o Jung) Korean	President
HAUZEN TOUR & TRAVEL CORP. 2282 Coretown Bldg., P. Celle St. cor. EDSA Extension, Pasay City	Duckhoon Jwa Korean	Tour Guide
ETHEREALLY MADE CO. LTD. 1224 T. Mapua St., Sta. Cruz, Manila	Xinghuang Shi Chinese	Import Manager
ETHEREALLY MADE CO. LTD. 1224 T. Mapua St., Sta. Cruz, Manila	Fengjiao Wang Chinese	Designing Manager
ETHEREALLY MADE CO. LTD. 1224 T. Mapua St., Sta. Cruz, Manila	Jianqun Shi Chinese	Assistant Manager
EAST CONTINENT MINING ENTERPRISES INC. 5C Legaspi Tower 300, 2600 Roxas Blvd., Malate, Manila	Shulin Pang Chinese	Assistant General Manager
EAST CONTINENT MINING ENTERPRISES INC. 5C Legaspi Tower 300, 2600 Roxas Blvd., Malate, Manila	Feng Yin Chinese	General Manager
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PHILIPPINE HOTELIERS, INC. (DUSIT HOTEL NIKKO) Ayala Center, 1223 Makati City	Kerstin Glaesser German	Italian Restaurant Manager
PHILIPPINE HOTELIERS, INC. (DUSIT HOTEL NIKKO) Ayala Center, 1223 Makati City	Armin Brandtner Austrian	Executive Chef
PHILIPPINE HOTELIERS, INC. (DUSIT HOTEL NIKKO) Ayala Center, 1223 Makati City	Kenichi Kanauchi Japanese	Japanese Chef
CLARITY PHILIPPINES PTY LIMITED Office 5 Level 12 Robinsons Summit Center, 6783 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Andrew Douglas Martin Pearce British	Program Director
OFFICETIGER PHILIPPINES CORPORATION 7/F East Gate Center, 169 EDSA Highway Hills., Mandaluyong City	Sidhartha Paul Cherian Indian	Operations Manager
BROADMEDIC INC. U-2107 21/F Tycoon Center, Pearl Drive, Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Doron Glazer Israeli	Marketing Manager
SLATE RESEARCH CENTER INC. Unit 1401-A 14/F 6780 JAKA Bldg., Ayala Ave., Legaspi Village, Makati City	Ryan David Marshall Canadian	Chief Operations Officer
SLATE RESEARCH CENTER INC. Unit 1401-A 14/F 6780 JAKA Bldg., Ayala Ave., Legaspi Village, Makati City	Ryan M. Ives American	Night Program Leader
SLATE RESEARCH CENTER INC. Unit 1401-A 14/F 6780 JAKA Bldg., Ayala Ave., Legaspi Village, Makati City	Andrew K. Clarke American	Research Analyst
KAI QI DEVELOPMENT CORP. Unit 706, 7/F Ortigas Bldg., Ortigas Ave., Pasig City	Meishu Lin Chinese	Technical Supervisor
KAI QI DEVELOPMENT CORP. Unit 706, 7/F Ortigas Bldg., Ortigas Ave., Pasig City	Yuanjun Fan Chinese	Sales Consultant
HEWLETT-PACKARD AP (HONGKONG) LTD.-PHIL. ROHQ 37/F Robinson's Summit Center, 6783 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Ying Choi Hui British	Technology Consultant I
CBC IMPORT & EXPORT TRADING LTD. CO. Rm 602-A Taytana Plaza Bldg., Plaza Lorenzo Ruiz, Binondo, Manila	Huinan Li Chinese	Sales Representative
BMCO R & E INC. 1602 Antel Corporate Center, 121 Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Jong Wook Park Korean	Marketing Manager
BAYVIEW TECHNOLOGIES, INC. 43/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, Ayala Ave., Makati City	Xinjian Zhu Chinese	Chinese Customer Support
OAKLEIGH CAPITAL LIMITED 21/F Tower 2, Enterprise Center, Ayala Ave., Makati City	Cheng Wah Tiew Malaysian	Chinese-language Sports Trader
GAMINGWEB, INC. 17/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Ngoc Mi Tran Vietnamese	Sports-book Operations Officer
GAMINGWEB, INC. 17/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Jiat Lee Wong Malaysian	Sports-book Operations Officer
GLAMOUR PLUS NAIL ART & FACIAL SERVICE CO. Unit 202 2/F Josefa Bldg., 1750 M. Adriatico St., Malate, Manila	Zhicheng Yan Chinese	Admin Manager

If you have any information/objection to the above mentioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

RAYMUNDO G. AGRAVANTE
OIC, Regional Director

(PDI - December 14, 2007)

P8B earmarked for irrigation projects

53,000 hectares of land irrigated in '07

By Amy R. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE has earmarked at least P8 billion next year for the restoration, repair and rehabilitation of irrigation facilities covering some 60,000 hectares of arable land.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap said the amount was necessary to increase production particularly of rice, which was seen hitting the 16-million-metric ton mark this year despite the prolonged dry spell and the typhoons that hit the country.

Last year, rice production reached 15.3 million MT.

Yap said higher spending for irrigation facilities in key rice-producing areas was a crucial element of the government's goal to attain rice self-sufficiency in 2010, raise farmers' incomes and make the staple cheaper for low-income consumers.

He said the earmarked amount covered foreign-assisted and locally funded projects.

The P9.419 billion allocated for irrigation in 2007 included foreign funds worth P5.497 billion and local funding of P1.903 billion. The remaining P2 billion came from other sources.

For 2007, some 53,000 hectares of arable land were irrigated. This fell short of the DA's target of 55,000 hectares.

For 2006 to 2010, the government is targeting to repair and rehabilitate irrigation facilities covering some 300,000 hectares of land.

Yap said, however, he wanted to see spending for irrigation and farm-to-market roads to increase to as much as P15 billion, as irrigation facilities had become even more vital with the reduced supply of water in many farm production areas due to denuded watersheds.

Yap said that with the restoration of irrigation facilities, the average palay production was expected to hit at least 4 metric tons a hectare, compared to the current 3 to 3.5 MT per hectare.

PNOC subsidiary declares P200M in dividends

By Abigail L. Ho

DESPITE LOWER PROFITS IN THE FIRST three quarters, state-run PNOC Exploration Corp., a subsidiary of Philippine National Oil Co., will pay P200 million in dividends to its stockholders.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, PNOC-EC acting corporate secretary Jose Sta. Ana said the company's board had approved the declaration of cash dividend of 9.99 centavos per share to stockholders of record as of Jan. 3, 2008.

The dividends, which will come from the company's unrestricted retained earnings as of end-2007, would be paid on Jan. 29, 2008.

PNOC-EC's declining share from the Malampaya Deep Water Gas-to-Power Project's cost recovery scheme caused the company to suffer a 30-percent net income drop to P1.5 billion in the first three quarters, from P2.1 billion in the same period the year before.

For the third quarter alone, profit dropped by 30 percent to P472.6 million from P711 million in 2006.

"The unfavorable variance was due mainly to the decrease in the Malampaya Project's net income brought about by the diminished cost available for recovery on the Malampaya Project," PNOC-EC had earlier said.

The cost recovery scheme is a Department of Energy-granted incentive, which allows the Service Contract 38 holders to deduct certain "approved costs" up to a maximum of 70 percent of the monthly sales revenue of the gas find before sharing the remainder with the government.

The government's share is then split among the DOE, Bureau of Internal Revenue and local government units.

In the January-September period, PNOC-EC posted gross revenue of P4.9 billion, with P3.4 billion coming from the Malampaya Project, P1.4 billion from the company's coal operations, P97.7 million from the Energy Supply Base, and P47.6 million from the San Antonio Gas Project.

Philcomsat infighting continues

By Daxim L. Lucas

A MAJOR SHAREHOLDER OF THE controversial Philcomsat group of companies yesterday accused a director and ranking official of a rival camp of misrepresenting herself as the authorized representative of the Poblador family.

The accusation, if true, brings into question the validity of Concepcion A. Poblador's role as chair of publicly-listed Philcomsat Holdings Corp. (PHC). The cash-rich company is owned by sequestered firms Philippine Overseas Telecommunications Corp. (POTC) and Philippine Communications Satellite Corp. (Philcomsat).

In a statement, Rafael A. Poblador said his younger sister, Concepcion, "is not, and was never, authorized to represent the Poblador group in POTC and Philcomsat."

"Any transaction entered into by her, for and on behalf of the said corporation or the Poblador group, will not be honored," he added.

In a telephone interview, Poblador—the executor of the estate of the late Honorio Poblador Jr.—said that Concepcion "does not own a single share" in either Philcomsat or POTC. "Neither has she been authorized to represent the family which owns a combined 13-percent stake in the controversial firms," he said.

"We've looked at the stock transfer books of the companies and her name does not appear there," he added.

Rafael is allied with the Africa-Bildner group, which has accused the PCGG-appointed Locsin-Poblador camp of dissipating the companies' assets while under their stewardship.

At stake in the long-running dispute is anywhere from P800 million to P1 billion of the group's cash and near-cash assets.

Court slaps TRO on Oriental rival

THE MAKATI REGIONAL TRIAL COURT yesterday issued a 72-hour temporary restraining order preventing the Platinum Group Metals Corp. from further spreading adverse news items against mining holding firm Oriental Peninsula Resources Group, which is set to list its shares on the exchange Wednesday next week.

In an order penned by Makati RTC executive judge Winlove Dumayas, PGMC was directed to "refrain and desist from causing the spread or circulation of malicious news items tending to prevent, obstruct, derail, impede and or frustrate the IPO of the shares of stock of Oriental Peninsula as well as from actually opposing the conduct of the said IPO or listing of the shares of stock on Dec. 19."

The case will be raffled tomorrow.

As this developed, the Securities and Exchange Commission reiterated that Oriental Peninsula has fully complied with the disclosure rules and all other requirements imposed on companies intending to go public.

The SEC issued a statement in response to allegations that the Commission may have violated its mandate to protect the investing public by approving the registration statement of Oriental Peninsula despite allegations that the mining holding firm failed to disclose a pending dispute between one of its subsidiaries, Citinickel Mines and Development Corp., and PGMC over a mineral property located in Palawan.

The corporation finance department has reviewed the allegations contained in the letter complaint filed by PGMC and it appears that these issues have been properly disclosed to in Oriental Peninsula's registration statement. That's why it took us a couple of days to issue a permit to sell securities to Oriental Peninsula because we wanted to make sure that all the issues raised by PGMC has been addressed," said SEC commission secretary Gerard Lukban.

BSP to relax rules on banks' ...

From page B3

tion Nestor Espenilla Jr. said there was a slim chance that the property speculation seen among banks before the Asian crisis would be repeated anytime soon.

"Thing are different this time around. First, because of the change in accounting rules, you have to value properly," Espenilla said.

He said capital regulations had changed and become tougher under the Basel2 capital adequacy rules, imposing penalty on practices that include holding on to foreclosed property assets.

PRULINK	PRU LIFE U.K.
Investments of Variable Life Insurance Contracts	Current Week December 11, 2007 / Last Week December 04, 2007
Bond Fund - Peso	1.67345 / 1.66121
Managed Fund - Peso	1.96505 / 1.94835
Growth Fund - Peso	1.92179 / 1.89852
Equity Fund - Peso	0.97339 / 0.96049
Bond Fund - US Dollar	1.4433 / 1.4341

* Note: These investments of variable life insurance contracts are not mutual funds. Life insurance products are regulated by the Insurance Commission

People, Events & Products

Qatar Airways installs high-tech entertainment system

QATAR AIRWAYS RECENTLY UNveiled its next generation in-flight entertainment system onboard its newly delivered Boeing 777 aircraft offering every passenger more than 700 entertainment options.

Rebranded Oryx Entertainment "Multiplex in the Sky", there are more than 150 international movies, 150 hours of TV programming, over 50 games and 500 audio CDs for passengers to choose from.

Passengers have greater control of their entertainment from the comfort of their seat, by listening and watching on demand programs at the time of their choice.

Qatar Airways is among a select few airlines to adopt the Panasonic eX2 system-the most comprehensive in-flight entertainment system in the aviation industry today-designed to give passengers the widest choice of interactive audio and video entertainment at 35,000 feet.

Passengers are able to choose their entertainment options either through touch screen seat back TV monitors or browse channels using handsets installed in each seat. The system has a unique onscreen graphic user interface allowing passengers to navigate in any one of eight languages.

The flag carrier of the State of Qatar took delivery of the first of its 32 Boeing 777s aircraft recently with the Dash 300 Extended Range version flying into Doha International Airport direct from the US company's Seattle manufacturing base.

The first B777 aircraft is equipped with 335 seats split into two cabins. In Business Class there are 42 seats, each with 15.4-inch seat back wide TV screens, while Economy Class features 293 seats with each TV screen measuring 10.6 inches, all offering optimum viewing.

Qatar Airways has opted for exciting in-flight programming content from around the world for the new-look Oryx Entertainment.

To celebrate the launch of Oryx Entertainment, Qatar Airways is showcasing the entire collection of 21 James Bond films onboard - from the first 007 movie, "Dr No", starring Sean Connery to "Casino Royale", featuring Daniel Craig.

Passengers will have ample opportunity to watch the entire collection as it will be available onboard throughout 2008.

In addition, there are more than 50 interactive games enabling passengers to either play on their own from the comfort of their seats, or with a fellow passenger sitting elsewhere on the aircraft. And a wide variety of artists from around the world help complement the 500-plus music CD jukebox selection available onboard.

Qatar Airways chief executive officer Akbar Al Baker said this marks an important day in the history of the airline with the delivery of its first Boeing aircraft-and with it a new interactive in-flight entertainment system to be proud of.

"In today's highly competitive aviation industry, airlines are pushing the boundaries to be ahead of the rest," he said.

Qatar Airways' first Boeing 777 will be deployed on the Doha-Washington route from January 2008, by which time the airline takes delivery of its second Boeing 777. Until then the aircraft will fly selected regional routes across the Middle East.

As one of the world's fastest growing airlines, Qatar Airways currently operates a modern fleet of 59 aircraft to 80 destinations across Europe, Middle East, Africa, Far East, Indian subcontinent and North America.

METROBANK PROMO WINNER OFF TO PARIS

La Femme de Paris winner, Lovina C. Reyes (3rd from left) gets an all expense paid 6-day-5-night trip to Paris, France. With her are (from left) Niña C. Quibilan-Reynoso, Metrobank Femme Visa product manager; Myla C. Gonzalez, Metrobank Card Corp's head of marketing and sales; and Butch Reyes, Metrobank Card Corp's head of product management and acquisition.

Globe Broadband hosts online games tournament

Globe gathered together online gamers and cosplayers for the biggest RAN Online and Audition Dance Battle competition in the country, the Globe Broadband Tournament of Champions held recently at the SM Mall of Asia.

The NCR Team composed of Julius David, Ramon Carlo Tinong, Jonathan Avendano and Marc Lim emerged as the champions in RAN Online, the Philippines' most played massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG).

The Davao Team comprising Jerry Laxamana Jr, Roque Charle Pedrosa, Robert Brian Dasalla and Francis John Esperancilla were the first runners-up, while Kenneth Plarisan, Donn Jobert Sevilla, Evee Marizz Nuevo and Junil Navarro of Cebu Team got the second runner-up slot for the RAN Online tournament.

For the Audition Dance Battle competition, Armelyn Brucales was the champion, Bryan Navarro from Cebu bagged the first runner-up post and Jaypee Gemongala from Davao came in the second runner up slot.

The cosplay winners were Christian Umali dressed as a RAN Hrybrid Swordsman Brawler, Caress Valdes dressed as a GE Female Elementalist and Dan Christian Briones dressed as a RAN Brawler.

Globe Broadband and E-Games held in-game auctions and offered free playtime to their subscribers during the whole-day event. Special promos and gift packs were also given away to both Globe Broadband and Globe subscribers.

Shown are online games enthusiasts nationwide who trooped to the Globe Broadband Tournament of Champions, which is in partnership with IP e-Games, Intel and PC Express, to witness and experience the big RAN Online and Dance Audition Battle Competition. This is the first of many more such events that Globe Broadband will bring to gamers nationwide by next year.

More PEP on B2-4

UNDERARM AND FOOT DEO ALL IN ONE BOTTLE

Milcu, a one-of-a-kind 2-in-1 deodorant powder formulated to prevent odor and perspiration for your underarm and feet, absorbs and eliminates the stench instead of just covering it up. It is mild and fragrance-free, thus does not darken skin or stain clothes. It's available in all leading drugstores nationwide and offers a variety of products to choose from: Milcu Underarm and Foot Deodorant powder (40g and 80g bottles); Milcu Magic Puff Deo; and Milcu Roll-On Deodorant. Milcu will leave you fresh and dry all day. To learn more about the products, log on to www.milcu.com.

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
NATIONAL HOUSING AUTHORITY

NOTICE OF DISPOSITION

The **NATIONAL HOUSING AUTHORITY** is inviting offers to purchase/lease by way of sealed bids the following commercial properties on an ***"As Is - Where Is"*** basis:

ITEM NO.	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	BASE PRICE/SQ.METER
I.	**FIRST OFFERING**		
	A. SALE		
001	962 sq.m. commercial lot	Kalayaan Avenue Corner Matalino St. Brgy. Central, Q.C.	PhP25,000/sq.m. or PhP24,050,0000.00
002-003	2 commercial lots, 228.32 sq.m. & 222.84 sq.m. each (For titling)	Phase II A, Karangalan Village Project, Pasig	PhP15,000/sq.m.
004-023	20 commercial lots with lot areas ranging from 307 to 518 sq.m.	Kilusang Sariling Sikap Dasmariñas Bagong Bayan Cavite	PhP5,500 to 6,000/sq.m.
024-030	7 commercial lots with lot areas ranging from 354 to 1,412 sq.m.	Area A-2 Dasmariñas Bagong Bayan, Cavite	PhP6,000 to PhP7,500/sq.m.
031-054	24 commercial lots with lot areas ranging from 1,000 to 1,229 sq.m.	Kapayapaan Ville Housing Project Canlubang, Laguna	PhP2,800 to PhP3,000/sq.m.
055	3,817 sq.m. industrial lot	Blk C4-IN, Lot 15 General Mariano Alvarez, Cavite	PhP4,000/sq.m. or PhP15,268,000.00
056	1,498 sq.m. commercial lot	Blk. 200, Lot 6 Bulihan Sites Services Project	PhP7,000/sq.m. or PhP10,486,000.00
	B. SALE OR LEASE		
	DASMARIÑAS BAGONG BAYAN, CAVITE		
057-060	4 commercial lots, 320 to 7,092 sq.m.	Area B	PhP8,000 to Php8,500/sq.m. or lease rate of PhP24.06 to PhP33.25/sqm.
061-066	6 industrial lots with 3 structures 1,136 sq.m. to 16,213 sq.m.	Area A-2	PhP4,000 to PhP6,000/sq.m. or lease rate of PhP11.75 to PhP20.00/sq.m.
067	2,952 sq.m. industrial lot	Area G-2	PhP6,500/sq.m. or lease rate of PhP21.00/sq.m.
068-075	8 industrial lots, with 2 structures 1,031 sq.m. to 9,748 sq.m.	Area D	PhP4,800 to PhP5,000/sq.m. or lease rate of PhP13.75 to PhP18.00/sq.m.
	DIAZ CASTELLAMONTE PROPERTY		
077	4 storey condominium type residential/ commercial bldg. on a 900 sq.m. lot	Otek Street corner Rizal Park South Road, Brgy. Rizal Monument, Baguio City	PhP52,983,000.00 or lease rate of PhP440,668/mo.
	C. LEASE		
078	3,066 commercial lot with 1,926 sq.m. structure (Former Kadiwa Center and leased by Guzman Institute)	Area B	Lot - PhP33.25/sq.m. Structure - PhP20.62/sq.m. or PhP141,659.00/mo.
	D. LEASE OR JOINT VENTURE ARRANGEMENT		
079	936.80 sq.m. lot with structure	Mayor Ignacio Santos St. (Formerly Banahaw St.) Cubao, Quezon City	Lot - PhP15,000/sq.m. or PhP14,052,000.00 Structure - PhP507,066.27

All properties for sale are covered with individual titles. Repayment period is a maximum of ten (10) years at an interest rate of 18% per annum.

Lease period is for a maximum of fifteen (15) years renewable for another five (5) years at the option of NHA.

For those who will participate in the public bidding, **BIDDING MATERIALS** may be secured for a non-refundable fee of PhP200.00 from the ***Commercial & Industrial Bids and Awards Committee (COINBAC), c/o CIED***, 2nd Floor, NHA Building, Elliptical Road, Q.C. For inquiry, please call Ms. Evelyn V. Ramos at the ff. tel. nos.: 922-3002, 928-4561 loc. 262263.

ACTIVITY	SCHEDULE	VENUE
A. *Submission of Pre-qualification Requirements*	Dec. 18 to 21, 2007 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.	2nd Floor CIED NHA Main Office Diliman, Q.C.
B. *Pre-Bid Conference*	December 19, 2007 1:30 p.m.	Operations Center, 3rd Floor, NHA Main Office
C. *Submission of Sealed Bids*	December 27, 2007 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 nn.	Operations Center
D. *Opening of Bids*	December 27, 2007 1:30 p.m.	Operations Center

The NHA reserves the right to reject any or all offers and applications for negotiated sale/lease, or any part thereof or to waive any required formalities and accept offers/applications most advantageous to the interest of NHA.

(Sgd.) **FROILAN R. KAMPITAN**
Chairperson, COINBAC
Assistant General Manager

(PDI - Dec. 14 & 17, 2007)

VEGA MANILA CREWMANAGEMENT, INC

we are family

is urgently in need of

FINANCIAL ASSISTANT

Qualifications:

- female; not more than 28 years old
- a graduate of B.S. Accountancy from reputable school
- previous Financial/Accounting Assistant experience in manning/ crewing company preferred
- computer literate
- possess excellent interpersonal skills and dynamic personality
- articulate in English, oral and written communication
- willing to work beyond working hours
- fresh graduates are welcome to apply

Salary : negotiable, commiserating qualification and experience

Successful applicant shall attain secured and long term employment with our fast growing company.

Please send resumes to **vfedelicio@vega-manila.com.ph** or apply in person at:

VEGA MANILA CREWMANAGEMENT, INC.
Unit 901 & 903, State Financing Center II,
Ortigas Ave., Mandaluyong City
(Beside POEA)
Tel.: 725-1840 / 722-6588
aoh: 0918 979 2337
Website: **www.vega-manila.com.ph**

State of Kuwait
Ministry of Health

Medical Shoes Technicians required for the Artificial Limp Centre Center, Ministry of Health, State of Kuwait with the following requirements:

1. Senior Medical Shoes Technicians (2)

Qualifications:
- Higher Secondary School with Two years diploma course plus 10 (ten) years experience

Job requirements:
- Knowledge of basics of the profession of all medical shoes manufacturing stages
- Knowledge and understanding how to take specific measures of diseases such as Congenital, feet problems, diabetes

2. Medical Shoes Assistant Technicians (2)

Qualifications:
- Higher Secondary School with Two years diploma course

Job requirements:
- Knowledge to take specific measures of diseases such as Gypsum-plastic-leather
- Manufacturing medical shoes with specialization in diseases like Paralysis-Blisters-Minor-knees and feet problems

3. Medical Shoes Technicians (2)

Qualifications:
- Higher Secondary School diploma industrial parts and five years experience

Job requirements:
- Ability to manufacture medical shoes, including feet problems, paralysis machines, Types of back-belts and lower manufacturing parts

4. Parts Manufacturing Technicians (6)

Qualifications:
- Diploma in industrial parts, medical equipment, with five years experience. In addition, should be able to comprehend English language for items mentioned above, the benefit of working in the field along with workstations who uses these Elements in real life situations.

Job requirements:
- Manufacturing Aljabar parts, manufacturing higher element parts and paralysis Substitute equipment.

Salary and Privileges:

The salary will be according to qualification and years of experience as per our Civil Services Commission regulations of the State of Kuwait. Thirty-five days annual leave.

Economy class air tickets to country of residence on joining duty and on termination of contract.

Applications including detailed C.V., copies of qualification and experience certificates, passport copy and names of three references to be sent to the following address:

EMBASSY OF THE STATE OF KUWAIT
1230 Acacia Road Dasmariñas Village, Makati City

RSLJR Realty
CP: 0917-8220986
Tel: (02) 912-8399
Fax: (02) 856-0325

FOR SALE

1. Agri Land in Tagaytay, 47.649ha. Overlooking Taal Lake. PhP500.00/sq.m.
2. Lot in Tagaytay - overlooking, 7ha. PhP4,500.00/sq.m.
3. Resort in Brgy. Tolentino, Tagaytay, 3,000 sq.m., with cabanas and a big, beautiful house, nice landscaping PhP29M
4. Beautiful Villa in Tagaytay, Lot Area 1,000 sq.m. Floor Area 500 sq.m. PhP12.5M
5. Commercial Lot with improvements in Mafugay St., Makati, 1.1 ha. PhP175,000.00/sq.m.
6. 5-storey Commercial Bldg in Bel-Air, Makati, TFA 2,700.00 sq.m., LA 580 sq.m. with parking area, PhP200M
7. 3 BR Res Condo in Salcedo 3, Makati, 150 sq.m., 3 Toilet Bathrooms, Maid's Rm with TB, 2 parking slots, PhP15M
8. Commercial Lot in Alabang-Zapote Road, 2,500 sq.m. @ PhP33,000/sq.m.
9. Fully Operating Resort in Maharlika St., Bgy. Balanoy, La Paz, Tarlac, 1.104 ha. With 2 pools, Fitness Gym, Karaoke Bar, 12 Family Rooms with TB, Bar with Billiards, 3 Function Rooms, 30 Open Cottages, Fishpond wide Parking Area. PhP25M
10. Farm Lots in Tanay, Rizal: 1,000 sq.m., 1 ha, 2ha, 4ha, 8ha, 24ha, 50ha. Price Range: PhP60.00-150.00/sq.m.

CIVIL ENGINEER
Min. 3 years experience - Construction/ Building Industry
Excellent Leadership Skills
Email resumé w/ pic to tatrm7@yahoo.com or call 09209523620

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Above-ave. communication/ presentation skills
Knowledgeable in condo/bldg/land developments
Part-time basis only
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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE
ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES
OFFICE OF THE AFP BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

(Procurement of 59 units Sniper Rifles)

1. The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), through the ***Special Allotment Release Order Nr. D-07-00818***, intends to apply the sum of ***TWELVE MILLION FOUR HUNDRED NINETY THOUSAND PESOS (PHP 12,490,000.00)*** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the corresponding contract for the ***Procurement of Sniper Rifle***. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The Armed Forces of the Philippines, through the GHQ BAC1, now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the following projects:

Nomenclature/Activity	Approved Budget for the Contract	Price of Bid Documents	Delivery Schedule
GHQ BAC1-MOD-PN(M)-035-07 59 units Sniper Rifles 5.56 mm ILS Package	PhP 12,490,000.00	PhP 6,000.00	To be delivered with 180 calendar days upon receipt of NTP or Letter of Credit, whichever comes later.

3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, corporation with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or corporations of a country the laws and regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who would be determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from AFP BAC Secretariat and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday to Friday excluding holidays.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below upon payment of a non-refundable fee. The method of payment willl be in the form of cash only. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. The AFP will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties at ***10:30 a.m., December 20, 2007 (Thursday)*** at the ***Silid Panday Pira***, G/F Bulwagang Mabini, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City.
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before ***9:00 a.m., January 8, 2008 (Tuesday)***. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in any form and corresponding amount allowed under RA 9184 and its IRR-A. Late bids shall not be accepted.
8. Bid opening shall be at ***9:00 a.m., January 8, 2008 (Tuesday)*** at the ***Silid Panday Pira, G/F Bulwagang Mabini, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City***. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidder's representatives who choose to attend at the address below.
9. Only offers or bids from suppliers who are themselves the manufacturers or their duly-authorized representatives shall be entertained. Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking three (3) similar contracts, within the last five (5) years, and the aggregate contract amounts should be equivalent to at least fifty percent (50%) of the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to be bid; and the largest of these similar contracts must be equivalent to at least twenty-five percent (25%) of the ABC of the proposed project to be bid.
10. To facilitate eligibility checking, manufacturers or their duly representatives who wish to participate in the public bidding may apply for registration wit the AFP BAC through the ***GHQ BAC 1 Secretariat*** as early as possible but not later than three (3) days prior to the scheduled submission and opening of bids.
11. The AFP reserves the right to accept or reject any and all Bids, declare a failure of bidding or not award the contract without incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Office of the AFP Bids and Awards Committee
G/F Bulwagang Syquio
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City
Contact Person: ***Ms. Edna B Malonzo***
Tel. Nr: 911-6001 Loc 6486/6487
Fax Nr: 911-6001 Loc 6485
Email Ad: **malonzo499@yahoo.com.ph**
Website: www.philgeps.net

(Sgd.) **BGEN JERRY V JALANDONI AFP**
Chairman, GHQ BAC1

(PDI - Dec. 14, 2007)

State of Kuwait
Ministry of Health

Ministry of Health, State of Kuwait the following categories of technicians:

1. Echo Technician
2. Cath Lab Technician

Qualification:

- Bachelor's degree in the respective field plus 2 (two) years experience (preferred).

Job requirements:

- Thorough knowledge of the profession.
- Good Command of English.

Applications including detailed C.V., copies of qualification and experience certificates, with passport copy to be sent to the following address:

EMBASSY OF THE STATE OF KUWAIT
1230 Acacia Road Dasmariñas Village, Makati City

BUYING
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Abu Diamonds and unusual watches
09178884040
7269687
email: worldwatch@gmail.com

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SWISS WATCHES | L.V. BAGS
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POTTER'S RIDGE HOTEL
TAGAYTAY
Km 67 Aguinaldo Highway (before Splendido)
Tel. (046) 4130368 / (046) 4134566 Mobile 09194629897
Email: pottersridgehotel@yahoo.com

Standard	Php	2,900	net good for two persons
De Luxe 1	Php	3,300	net good for two persons
De Luxe 2	Php	3,500	net good for two persons
Superior D	Php	4,200	net good for two persons
Family room	Php	5,000	net good for three persons
Suite	Php	6,500	net good for two persons

Rates are inclusive of breakfast for two (2)
Additional person sharing room Php 600 per head per night with breakfast

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Hapag-Lloyd Philippines Inc.
an Aboitiz company

NOTICE OF LOSS

This is to notify that the ff. Piltel Stock Certificate Nos. issued on 07/11/1995 were lost: 00077043, 00077044, 00077045, 0077167, 00077187, 00077219 & 00077170 issued on 07/11/1995 were lost. Any transactions entered hereinto will not be honored by the company with business address at: 25/F, Trident Tower, 312 Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City.

(PDI – December 14, 2007)

NATIONAL CLASSIFIEDS
The Widest Read Classified

More Classified Ads:

HOME GUARANTY A11
DOLE-NCR B8
LST SUMMIT INC. B8

More employment opportunities in today's JOB MARKET. Every Sunday with the PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

JOB Market Part 1 — More jobs on Section M — Where You Find The Best.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life."
John 3:16

"To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven." - Ecclesiastes 3:1

ARTEMIO GUIPOCO DELA CRUZ

of Cavite City, Padre Burgos, Quezon & Pasig City

died peacefully on December 10, 2007 at the age of 77.

His loving wife, Natividad; children Marilou, Preciosa, Lydia, Racquel, Gideon and Rodel; grandchildren and great-grandchildren; sisters; other relatives and friends offer their thanksgiving for a life well lived as he awaits resurrection.

His earthly remains lie in state at the Loyola Memorial Chapels, Guadalupe Makati City.

Final necrological services will be at high noon on Saturday, December 15, 2007 followed by cremation at Loyola Crematory Services, Makati City.

Please omit mass cards.

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."
Matthew 11:28 and 30

JAIME T. NIVERBA

Peacefully joined our Lord on December 12, 2007 at the age of 75.

He shall be missed by his dearest wife **Paning**; children **Rolly**, **Maricar**, **Monina** and **Dong**, **Malu** and **Theo**, **Tess** and **Trevor**, and his grandchildren **Trish**, **Macky** and **Chaska**.

His ashes lie in state at Sanctuarium, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City until Saturday, December 15, 2007.

ROMAN TAN CHUA

Returned to his maker on December 12, 2007
at the age of 52.

He is survived by

HIS WIFE
Evelyn

CHILDREN
Stephanie
Pamela Jane
Dominique

His cremated remains will be at the Bonifacio Chapel of Funeraria Paz, Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque from the evening of December 14 until December 16.

Interment will be on Sunday, December 16 following the necrological service.

"There is a time and a season for everything
A time to be born and a time to die.
A time to weep and a time to mourn. A time to laugh and a time to dance.
God has made everything beautiful in its time."
- Ecclesiastes 3:1, 2, 4 & 11

MARCELINA MORENO ROA

of Daet and San Vicente, Camarines Norte

Peacefully joined her Creator on the 11th day of December 2007 at the age of 91, in Cortlandt Manor, New York

Her bereaved daughter, **Eloisa & Ireneo Medalla**, her grandchildren **Leonor Iris & Ed Hagberg** and **Emerito**, great-grandchildren **Evan** and **Kaylie Nicole Hagberg**, daughter **Camila & Josue Villapando** and children, sister **Rita M. Yu** and sister-in-law **Adalia Moreno**, her nephews and nieces, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains were interred at Rose Hills Cemetery in Putnam Valley, New York on the 12th day of December 2007 at 10:00 A.M.

The following Holy Masses will be offered for the eternal repose of her soul:

December 13 to 20, 7:00 AM (Dec. 16, Sunday, 7:30 AM)	Christ the King Church, Greenmeadows, Quezon City
December 13 to 21, 6:00 AM	St. John the Baptist Church Daet, Camarines Norte
December 21, 8:00 AM MEMORIAL MASS	Christ the King Church, Greenmeadows, Quezon City

We invite relatives and friends to join her family at these Masses. Thank you and God bless us all.

DOROTEO L. TUTANES

Died gracefully on December 11, 2007 at the age of 23.

His parents **Dante** & **Marlyn**; brothers **JR** & **Patrick**; sister **April** and other relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at his residence at Brgy Street, Lower Bicutan, Taguig, Metro Manila.

Interment will be on Sunday, December 16, 2007 at Manila Memorial Park Malolos, Bulacan after the 2:00 p.m. mass.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

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OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS: ❶ Copy of Death Certificate ❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

CLASSIFIEDS

DAVAO CITY WATER DISTRICT
J.P. Laurel Ave., Davao City
Telephone No. 082-221-9400 (local 204) / Fax: 082-2264885

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Davao City Water District (DCWD), through its Bids and Awards Committee-B (BAC-B), invites contractors registered with and classified by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the hereunder contract:

Name of Contract : **800mmØ Temporary By-Pass Transmission Line Crossing Davao River**
Location : **Diversion Road, Maa, Davao City**
Brief Description : **The project includes the Pipelaying of 800mmØ MLCSP and 914.40mmØ SDR-17 HDPE Pipe, Installation of 2.0 units Valve Box, Valves, Fittings, Concrete Ballast/sinker along the HDPE Pipeline, Steel and HDPE Pipe joint connection, tapping, hydrotesting and disinfection, Butt-fusion method for joining HDPE Pipe and fittings.**
Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) : **Php 10,200,011.91**
Contract Duration : **112 Calendar Days**

Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB License applicable to the contract, have completed a similar contract with value of at least 50% of the ABC, and have key personnel and equipment (listed in the Eligibility Forms) available for the prosecution of the contract. The BAC will use non-discretionary pass/fail criteria in the Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC-B will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation-A (IRR-A).

The schedule of BAC-B activities is as follows:

BAC-B Activities	Schedule
1. Receipt from prospective bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI) including Application for Eligibility	December 14-21, 2007
2. Issuance of Eligibility Forms	December 14-21, 2007
3. Receipt of Eligibility Requirements	December 17-28, 2007
4. Notice of Results of Eligibility Check	January 7-22, 2008
5. Issuance of Bid Documents	January 9-29, 2008
6. Pre-bid Conference	February 4, 2008; 2:00 P.M.
7. Receipt and Opening of Bids	February 18, 2008; 2:00 P.M.

The BAC-B will issue to prospective bidders Eligibility Forms thru the BAC-B Secretariat c/o at the DCWD Office of the AGM for Operations, Bajada, Davao City, upon their submission of a LOI, and upon their payment of a non-refundable amount of **Php 1,500.00** to the DCWD Cashier. Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to the BAC-B at the said address. They may also obtain the results of the eligibility Check by the Bac-B at the same address.

The BAC will issue Bidding Documents only to bidders declared by the Bac-B to be eligible for the bidding upon payment of a non-refundable amount of **Php 3,500.00** to the DCWD Cashier.

The Davao City Water District assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) **ENGR. EDWIN V. REGALADO**
Chairperson, Bids & Awards Committee-B

(PDI – December 14, 2007)

AUCTION

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Online Auction
GENERATING SETS
Closing: Friday, 14 December 2007 - 18:00 CCT (Local Time)
Location of the Assets: Cavite, Philippines
Diesel Generators; Dry Type Transformers & Uninterruptible Power Supply
VIEWING: STRICTLY BY APPOINTMENT
For more details please visit our website at **www.goindustry.com** & search for **Generating Sets**

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Closing: Tuesday, 18 December 2007 - 18:00 CCT (Local Time)
Location of the Assets: Cavite, Philippines
Asset Includes:
DISCO Fully Automatic Grinder; (6) ESEC Die Attach Bonders; (33) KAIJO / (26) K&S Wire Bonders, (6) Die Coating Machines, (5) Auto Mold Decullers, (5) Auto Frame Loaders, Flexible Pad Marking Machines, (16) 3rd Optical Machines; (4) Die Attach cue Oven; (11) Transfer Encapsulation Presses; Etc.
VIEWING: STRICTLY BY APPOINTMENT
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Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
Regional Office No. IV-A
3rd Flr., Andenson Bldg., II, Brgy. Parian, Calamba City
December 13, 2007

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s.

	Name and Address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National/Citizenship	Position
1.	SAMMA CORPORATION CEZ, Rosario, Cavite	Mr. Young Woo Han/ Korean	Consultant
2.	BIGMATE PHILIPPINES, INC. FPIP, Sta. Anastacia, Sto. Tomas, Batangas	Mr. Yoshinori Tomobe/ Japanese	Assistant Manager
3.	NESTLE PHILIPPINES, INC. Bo. Niugan, Cabuyao, Laguna	Mr. Gigi Nefalar Balderama/ New Zealander	New Product Development Executive
4.	NESTLE PHILIPPINES, INC. Bo. Niugan, Cabuyao, Laguna	Mr. Harald Priemer/ Austrian	Plant Manager - Coffee
5.	MIDTOWN MFG. PHILIPPINES, INC. CPIP, Brgy. Batino, Calamba City	Mr. Ravi Subramaniam/ Indian	Treasurer and General Manager
6.	STAR SOUND ELECTRONICS, INC. PEZA, Rosario, Cavite	Mr. Sung Jang Song/ Korean	President
7.	STAR SOUND ELECTRONICS, INC. PEZA, Rosario, Cavite	Mr. Young Koo Song/ Korean	Treasurer
8.	SHS PERFORATED MATERIALS, INC. CIP II, Calamba City	Mr. Winfried Harmannshenn/ German	President
9.	P.L. TECHNOLOGY, INC. CPIP, Brgy. Batino, Calamba City	Mr. Cheulho Kwon/ Korean	Senior Sales Manager

If you have any information/objection to the above-mentioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

ATTY. RICARDO S. MARTINEZ, SR., CESO III
Regional Director

(PDI–December 14, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
CENTRAL OFFICE BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
Building 6, San Lazaro Compound, Rizal Avenue, Sta. Cruz, 1003 Manila
Trunk Line 7438301 Loc. 1625-1627, 1650-1652; Fax: 743-8301 Loc. 1651
URL: http://www.doh.gov.ph

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (CONSULTANT SERVICES)

Philippines
Second Women's Health and Safe Motherhood Project
Project Loan No. 7290 PH

The Government of the Philippines has applied a Loan to the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), and intends to apply part of the proceeds of this Loan to payments under the following contracts:

No.	Project	Brief Description
IFB-CS-FAP-2007-25	Capability Building of WHSMP Teams at the National, Regional (CHD-BICOL/ CARAGA and LGU levels (Surigao del Sur and Sorsogon	The consulting firm is task to design, develop and manage the conduct of a capability-building program to support the implementation of the WHSMP2.

The Department of Health now invites eligible consulting firms to express interest in providing the services for the above-mentioned projects. The consultant must provide information indicating that they are qualified to perform the services (i.e. brochures, description of similar assignments undertaken, experience in similar conditions, availability of appropriate skills of key staff, job capacity of the firm, and other information that could establish the firm's qualification).

A consultant will be selected in accordance with the procedures set out in the World Bank's Guidelines: Selection and Employment of Consultants by World Bank Borrowers (the Consultant Guidelines) using Consultants Qualification selection method.

Expressions of Interests (EOIs). PHILGEPS Certificate and all requested information from the consultants must be delivered to the address below by no later than 28 December 2007.

ATTY. ALEXANDER A. PADILLA
Undersecretary of Health
Chairperson, Central Office Bids and Awards Committee
Building 5, San Lazaro Compound, Sta. Cruz, Manila
Tel# 7438301 loc 1650-1652
Telefax No.: 7438301 loc. 1651
Email: cobacsecretariat@yahoo.com.ph

Interested consultants may download shortlisting requirements including prescribed formats to be used from the DOH website: www.doh.gov.ph and consultants must download the Expression of Interest (EOI) at www.philgeps.net. Further information may be obtained at the afore-given address during office hours.

(Sgd.) **ALEXANDER A. PADILLA**
Undersecretary of Health
Chairperson, Central Office Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI--Dec. 14, 2007)

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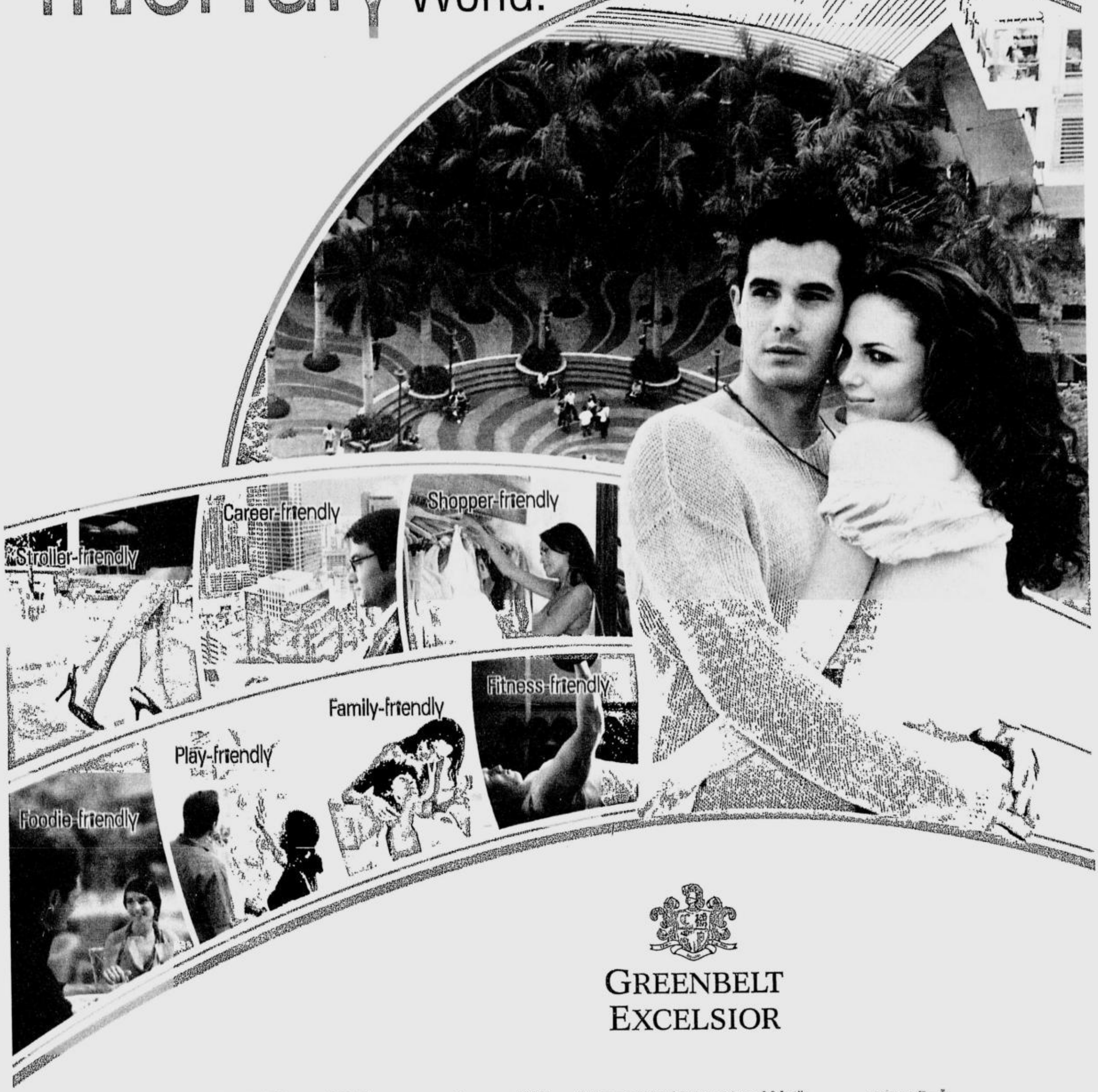

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Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

ARABICA was first introduced by the Spaniards.
EV ESPIRITU/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

Cordillera arabica growers roast it with big players

Producing, consuming coffee are woven into livelihood, rituals of Cordillerans

By Maurice Malanes
Inquirer Northern Luzon

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—Where in the country can you throw arabica coffee seeds into the soil and can grow to bear those aromatic coffee beans, which, if roasted, processed and brewed, is the profitable magic word at every coffee shop on the block?

Arabica coffee, one of the most expensive and aromatic coffee varieties worldwide, grows only in a few select areas in the Philippines, such as in the provinces of Benguet and Mt. Province, and in certain areas of Ifugao, Kalinga, Abra and Apayao.

"The Cordillera has a competitive edge in producing arabica coffee. Unfortunately, local arabica growers have yet to learn to compete with the big national and multinational players," says Thomas Killip, a former mayor of Sagada, Mt. Province, and now presidential assistant for Cordillera affairs.

When the Office of the President tasked Killip's office to study and look for economic initiatives that could help alleviate poverty in the Cordillera, he and his staff turned to the potentials of arabica coffee.

Why arabica coffee?

Killip says the Cordillera has started producing organically grown arabica coffee after it was first introduced by the Spaniards.

Killip also cites how producing and consuming coffee have become woven into the economic livelihood, cultural rituals and culinary practices of Cordillerans.

"The best thing is that arabica coffee, although produced for household use and grown in backyards, requires minimum farm inputs so almost everybody in a community can grow it," he says.

Killip should know because his hometown of Sagada is known for its aromatic arabica coffee grown in between limestone rocks in the village of Fidelisan.

"Requiring no chemical fertilizers and pesticides, coffee production has likewise helped protect the environment while helping control erosion in sloping terrain," he says.

Killip laments, however, that despite its favorable benefits and potentials, arabica coffee in the upland region has remained a secondary crop, produced and traded in negligible quantities with inferior processing and marketing qualities.

Arabica coffee is a potential earner for many Cordillera farmers, says Richard Abellon, Killip's assistant.

Abellon cites how a kilogram of ready-to-roast arabica coffee beans was selling at P70 two years ago but now sells at P140, or a 100 percent increase.

Problems

Despite local Arabica coffee's potential as a top earner, local growers need to improve not only their production, but also their marketing, says Killip.

He says local coffee processing remains crude because post-harvest facilities and technology are still not available.

He also laments that as in the vegetable industry, middlemen dictate the price of coffee beans "while products of local entrepreneurs remain marginalized in the competitive coffee market dominated by big national and multinational traders."

Killip appreciates the various initiatives by individual and coffee growers and local traders such as the Benguet Organic Coffee Arabica Enterprises Limited Inc. (Bocaeli). The group is a cooperative of more than 200 backyard coffee growers in Benguet.

But Killip says these initiatives are still "at best too localized and too diffused to make a dent within the ... industry."

Killip also finds current programs of various government agencies and the private sector fragmented.

"[As a result, these programs] remain unable to decisively address the problem of production volume and quality product development," he says.

Empowering small growers

Killip is optimistic the Cordillera can be transformed into the country's arabica capital by empowering local growers if they are

CORDILLERA/ B2-2

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The life and times of a Delhi beggar

BABAJI REUTERS

NEW DELHI—BABAJI WAS born without hands or forearms, and so he is not surprised that he has ended up begging in a subway in the Indian capital. "My arms have been like this since birth. It is God's will," he said in an interview. "I never went to school—how would I hold anything?"

Although Babaji, 51, is resigned to never marrying himself, weddings have nonetheless proved the bane of his life.

He came to Delhi about six months ago with a seemingly hopeless target: To raise the 50,000 to 70,000 rupees ($1,250 to $1,750) he reckons he needs to pay the dowry of his niece.

He is doing this by begging for pennies.

Smiling at passersby from his usual spot, he sits cross-legged with a bowl on the floor in a central subway, lifting the stumps of his arms imploringly.

The practice of paying a dowry is illegal in India, but remains the norm, and Babaji has assumed the responsibility of finding the money as the eldest man in the family.

"My sister's husband died. It was God's will. She has two daughters, and I have to get one married," he said. "It's my responsibility."

Begging is illegal too, but so far Babaji has not been caught and jailed, despite promises by Delhi's leaders to lock up the city's beggars before the 2010 Commonwealth Games take place.

Babaji says he earns 50 to 60 rupees a day, sometimes 100.

"Only God knows how I'll get the money," he said. "I have no money right now. I have nothing saved. I just manage to eat."

All he knows is that he is even less likely to find the money back home in his village in the state of Uttar Pradesh.

Babaji was a teenager when his father died, but most of the money made by selling the family clothes shop went to pay the dowry of Babaji's sister, about 30,000 to 40,000 rupees, he said.

"I loved the village. The people there loved me. I am forced to live here," he said.

Here no one ever smiles at him and people rarely talk to him, except for a vegetable seller who lets Babaji sleep on a patch of pavement near his shop.

The vegetable seller makes sure Babaji does not go hungry.

"He says that I'm lucky for him," Babaji said.

He says he does not feel bitter about his situation.

"No one is responsible for this state of mine," he said.

"It is God's will." *REUTERS*

In India, the poor are sent to jail for begging

NEW DELHI—MOST MORNings in New Delhi, a battered van sets off around the Indian capital and snatches bedraggled and disabled men from the streets.

These men are among the last things Delhi wants to see as it spruces itself up ahead of hosting the 2010 Commonwealth Games, seen as a chance to flaunt the capital as the face of a new, more modern India.

Hundreds of beggars are being locked up for between one and ten years under antibegging laws.

As the raid van patrols the streets of Delhi, officers watch expectantly through the windows as a hunchbacked young man in rags hobbles around a corner, his withered left leg dangling between his crutches, a memento of childhood polio.

The man stopped at a roadside kiosk and stretched out a hand. The kiosk owner took pity.

"He gave him money, let's go!" shouted A.M. Pandey, head of the Delhi's beggar raiding team, as he and a colleague hurtled out of the van towards the man, who was carefully pocketing a one-rupee coin (about 2 US cents).

The shocked man first tried smiling his way out of trouble as he was led across the road, his crutches scrabbling on the tarmac.

"Don't push me," he said, his smile quickly dissolving in tears when he realized he was being forced into the van.

"I'll go home and not beg, I promise you."

While India's economy may be growing faster than ever, so are income inequalities. It still has no comprehensive welfare system to keep millions of people out of desperate poverty.

Activists say it is a double injustice to imprison those that hit rock bottom in Indian cities, and they want begging decriminalized.

Even some of those working within the system, who repeatedly bring up the government pressure they are under with the coming of the Commonwealth Games, agree there are serious problems.

A welfare officer at one of the beggar jails said he had men in his custody who he believed were innocent homeless laborers, who can look indistinguishable from beggars.

Innocent men convicted

The men caught during raids are initially locked up in a rat-infested north Delhi detention center. There is no phone for them to call family or friends, although they are allowed to write or dictate a letter.

Eventually they appear before a magistrate in a dedicated beggars court. Nearly 3,000 men shuffle through each year.

The defendant's case is decided on the strength of his word against that of the government official who originally bundled him into the van. Sometimes there is a lawyer from a nongovernmental organisation to help.

Proving that begging took place is not necessary.

As the 50-year-old law says, "having no visible means of subsistence," and so being likely to beg, is enough for a conviction.

Some men go free. Others are locked up until they can get someone to pay a bond, typically 3,000 rupees ($75). The rest are sent to a beggar jail for one to three years, or up to ten on a second offense—the same penalty as for violent robbery.

If they are "blind, a cripple or otherwise incurably helpless," as the law puts it, they can be locked up for the rest of their lives, at the discretion of a senior civil servant.

"This law criminalizes poverty," said Paramjeet Kaur, the director of homeless charity Aashray Adhikar Abhiyan.

"Mostly the people who are caught are not beggars, they are the working homeless or travellers, people new to the city."

A welfare officer at one detention center agreed there was some truth in this. "It happens, people get caught who aren't begging but who are just migrant laborers living on the road," he said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Rehab doesn't work

There are nearly 60,000 beggars in Delhi, according to the local government—nearly a third are children.

The ancient idea of giving alms as a religious duty is still strong, which is why temples and mosques are the first places the raid van heads to each morning to catch beggars.

But some middle-class Indians just find beggars irritating.

Members of the New Delhi Bar Association successfully urged the courts this year to see that more beggars are locked up, saying some of them can be rude and threatening.

Likewise, the media routinely describe beggars as a menace, and characterize them as scheming and surprisingly wealthy members of organized criminal gangs.

But many authorities working with beggars say there is almost no evidence for such claims. Most beggars earn less than 50 rupees a day (about $1), according to two separate government surveys—about the price of a cappuccino in a ritzy Delhi cafe.

Most migrated to Delhi from villages in India's poorest states for lack of income, often due to illiteracy, disease or old age. Many are women and children, but the government struggles to find the female staff needed by law to catch them.

Rehabilitation is usually given as the main justification for jailing Delhi's beggars, but only a dozen or so men out of the 350 currently locked up at one of the beggar homes opt to take the spinning, handloom and carpentry classes offered there.

One convict said the rest of them—who spend their days lying on mats on the floor, 20 to a room—had been waiting more than a month for the television to be fixed.

None of the officers who spoke to Reuters believed that anyone benefited from the training classes offered, the same conclusion reached by a Supreme Court committee's investigation in 2005.

Among the more diligent students were Ashok, 42, and Vidya, 60, who insisted they were wrongly caught.

REUTERS

Firm's marketing campaign begets a good deed

BECAUSE A SHAKEY'S BRANCH WAS near their house, Alproceso Reyes would always take his son, Alproceso Reyes II, nicknamed Prongs, to eat there. Not only did the dad enjoy the food, but he remembered that as a child, he was amazed at seeing the show (i.e. how the pizzas were made—hand-tossed in the air and then caught deftly by what seemed to him, then, simply by the thumb and forefinger of the man he called "Shakey's Pizza Maker"). Dad was sure Prongs would enjoy watching this show, too. Prongs is a sprightly 8 year old who always excelled in school and was never a problem to anyone.

One Sunday, the family went to their favorite Shakey's restaurant for their weekly after-church treat. It was there that they heard of the raffle and got really excited. Prongs was so excited—he wanted to see Disneyland and was so sure he would win the raffle that he filled up his own raffle stub.

Months later, and to his surprise, Prongs heard his name mentioned on TV as one of the winners.

He rushed to his father's bedroom to tell him about the win but saw his dad was sleeping. He gently closed the door but silently jumped up and down with joy.

When his dad woke up and Prongs told him, his father asked if he was sure of his win, and Prongs said: "Dad, we must be the only two people with the name Alproceso!"

That same afternoon they went to the Shakey's restaurant near their home and were told that the awarding was set for about a month later and would be held at the Shakey's head office.

During the waiting period, Prongs got sick and was hospitalized. His condition worsened and on Sept. 5, 2007 he passed away.

Prong's hospitalization totalled P300,000.

After the burial, the Reyes went to the Shakey's head office for the awarding of the winners. The Shakey's management noticed during the picture-taking that the family was sad and asked why. At first the family did not want to tell them but eventually told the story of Prongs and asked if the prize could be converted to cash.

Somebody present during the awarding said the Shakey's staff were crying upon hearing the story of Prongs.

The general manager and the marketing director conferred with some of the other Shakey's executives upon hearing the story. They decided to convert the winning prize into cash which totalled P100,000 and added another P100,000 to pay for the balance for the hospitalization [the family only had P100,000 to pay for the bills].

The story of Prongs has been going around the e-mail with people asking to patronize Shakey's pizza for what they did. But Shakey's did not want the story to come out as they felt people might think they were exploiting the situation.

In fact the press release on the awarding of the raffle winners did not mention anything about the passing of Prongs and Shakey's help to the family.

The Shakey's Dine and Drive promo generated one million entries that were submitted, 153 were proclaimed winners of laptops, gift certificates, music players, and other exciting prizes. Of these winners, 3 emerged as grand winners of a Honda CRV, and two tickets for five to Hong Kong with $1000 pocket money. Shakey's marketing director Meggie Jose, fondly shares that the winners were all regular Shakey's patrons and that they deserved the rewards.

Family tradition

Grand prize winner, Rosita Cajaron is a proud housewife from Bulacan. She enthusiastically shares how she and her family has grown up with Shakey's, also remembers being brought to different Shakey's restaurants by her dates when she was single.

True enough, the practice of going to Shakey's to celebrate an important occasion remained a family tradition that on the birthday of one of her children, the family marked this birthday at the Shakey's Mall of Asia branch. For the food they ordered, they got six raffle entries for the Dine and Drive Promo.

GRAND prize winner gets the key. (L-R) Shakey's marketing director Meggie Jose, winner Rosita Cajaron; GM Vic Gregorio; brand manager Coochy Mamaclay and J Romero's Mon Olbes

SHAKEY's Meggie Jose with Alproceso and Genevieve Reyes, and Vic Gregorio

The family was celebrating Rosita's birthday in Tagaytay when she received a phone call from friends that her name was announced on TV as grand prize winner.

Shakey's upgraded to an automatic transmission model the Honda CRV manual transmission model she was supposed to win.

Providential pause

John Advincula is a young call-center agent working in Cebu. He was headed to the airport on his way home to Bacolod when he decided he must make his usual stop and eat his favorite thin crust pizza at Shakey's. Little did he know his stopover at his favorite restaurant and filling out a raffle promo entry form would be two of the luckiest decisions in his life.

John won a family trip to Hong Kong for 5 people. Coincidentally, the Advincula family has five members. Since he started working, John has been mulling over what special occasion present he could give his mother. Needless to say, he was speechless upon finding out about his windfall.

Cordillera arabica growers roast it with big players

From page B2-1

LOCAL coffee processing remains crude because post-harvest facilities and technology are still not available.

to compete with the giants in the coffee industry.

But he says small arabica coffee growers need all the support from local entrepreneurs, academic institutions, the private sector, local governments and government agencies through what he calls "convergence" of efforts.

"Local growers and these various sectors need to have a common framework, program and structure in developing the arabica coffee industry in the region," he says. "In doing so, the various initiatives and programs could be synchronized and streamlined."

Coffee councils

Killip says various town and provincial coffee councils has been formed since his office started its program in 2005 to help consolidate and synchronize initiatives of local growers and of private and public sectors.

A municipal coffee council was formed in Sagada and three provincial coffee councils—in Benguet, Mt. Province and Ifugao—were formed lately.

Killip's office, in coordination with local growers' groups, private groups and government agencies, seeks to federate into a regional body all these town and provincial arabica coffee councils.

This regional body, which may yet be called a Cordillera Arabica Coffee Regional Council, seeks to help coordinate efforts—from setting up seedling nurseries and improving production to supporting the development of local post-harvest technology, improving process and packaging, and marketing.

Supporting this effort for the local arabica coffee industry is the Episcopal Church of Northern Philippines. It has set aside some of its idle lands as pilot areas for arabica coffee production to help provide income for its members.

The Episcopal Church is also willing to host buying stations where local arabica coffee growers can sell their coffee beans at a standard "fair trade price," says Killip.

"Through the municipal, provincial and regional arabica coffee councils, small local growers can make the most out of the local coffee industry and can compete with the big players in the industry," he says.

Gift-giving done digital

Computer arts students share ideas on personalized presents

TWENTYSOMETHINGS INGRID DIMACULangan, Nicole Angela Mercado and August Martinez personalize their Christmas presents and bring their creativity into play in gift-giving. And because of the knowledge and skill they learned when they studied the Digital Arts course, they are now taking their creativity a notch higher.

From paint brush to mouse

Since high school, Ingrid has been making personalized greeting cards for family and friends. "I painted cards and bookmarks using watercolor. Since I took up digital arts at First Academy of Computer Arts, I won't be using watercolor anymore," she says. "This time, I will color, design and layout the cards using my computer. The skills I learned helped me in designing better and more quickly than before. I can customize my gifts, so no designs are alike which make them more special."

For the holiday season, Nicole Angela Mercado also creates personalized greeting cards that showcase her artistic talent. This year however, she is giving away customized shirts, bag tags and vector portraits to her loved ones. "When I think about what to give a person for Christmas, I consider his or her interests and hobbies," she says. "I will give bag tags to friends who love to travel and vector portraits for those who are into photography." She is very happy about the digital arts skills she acquired in First Academy. "With it, you can easily create something nice in just one sitting. You do not have to worry about making errors because you can effortlessly remove your mistake with simple commands in your computer."

Digital art in cookie wrappers

"I love spicing up simple things," says August Martinez. The writer and budding entrepreneur has just started a cookie business and plans to give his products this Christmas. Aside from taste, August says that package design is crucial in getting a merchandise noticed. He credits his education in First Academy for teaching him to create attractive designs for his cookies. He adds that he wouldn't have the confidence to jump-start his business without the knowledge he has gained from the academy.

August, Ingrid and Nicole are aware of the vast earning potential a career in digital arts could give them.

Designed for the new generation of multimedia artists, the First Academy of Computer Arts' digital arts course is a comprehensive program that covers intensive training on print media arts, advanced graphic arts and animation media arts; web design using the latest in web technologies; and 3D animation. Short courses include amateur digital filmmaking, digital photography, digital comics, manga illustration, junior digital arts and digital scrapbook.

First Academy of Computer Arts is at the 2/F Saville Building, 8728 Paseo de Roxas Avenue corner Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City, tels. (632) 898-2724 to 26. Also visit their website at www.firstacademy.net for more information.

BROWNIES

COOKIES

Culinary school for young women holds food bazaar

THE YOUNG WOMEN IN PUNLAAN School are training hard to someday join the workforce of restaurants and fine-dining establishments but the reality is that a majority of them do not even have the means to eat three meals a day. To help raise funds for the food and transportation stipend of some 120 scholars, a food sale is being organized by the school, offering Christmas goodies baked by the students.

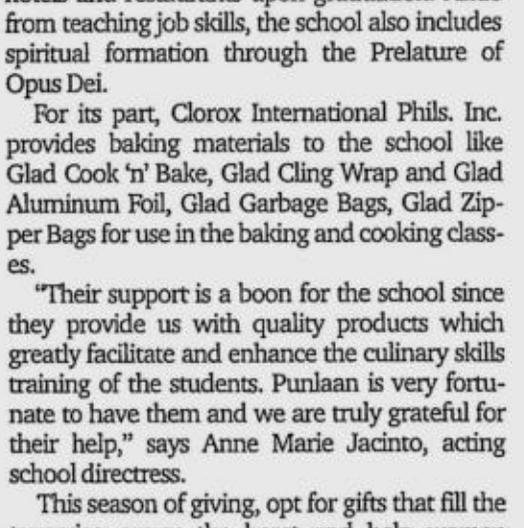
If you're doing last-minute holiday shopping, you can choose to have a meaningful and mouth-watering yuletide celebration by adding these treats to your shopping list: Choco chip/walnut/raisin cookies, spritz butter cookies and brownies. Customers can expect good-quality baking given that Punlaan is an NGO-managed technical-vocational school focused on food and beverage services training.

Currently, student population in Punlaan on Paterno Street in San Juan stands at 160 students each year. Many of the scholars live in Fairview, Cainta, Antipolo, Taytay and Bulacan, requiring transportation and food allowances for on-the-job trainings in Makati, Manila, and other sites. Funds are always needed but there's definitely room for hope given that Punlaan has a 100-percent track record of all graduates becoming immediately employed in prestigious hotels and restaurants upon graduation. Aside from teaching job skills, the school also includes spiritual formation through the Prelature of Opus Dei.

For its part, Clorox International Phils. Inc. provides baking materials to the school like Glad Cook 'n' Bake, Glad Cling Wrap and Glad Aluminum Foil, Glad Garbage Bags, Glad Zipper Bags for use in the baking and cooking classes.

"Their support is a boon for the school since they provide us with quality products which greatly facilitate and enhance the culinary skills training of the students. Punlaan is very fortunate to have them and we are truly grateful for their help," says Anne Marie Jacinto, acting school directress.

This season of giving, opt for gifts that fill the tummies, warm the heart and help women scholars graduate. These gift ideas are very affordable—brownies are at P100, choco chip/walnut/raisin cookies at P110 while spritz butter cookies are available at P75. For orders and pickups or inquiries about the school, please call Maridel Pagayonan at telephone numbers 727-05-81/82, Mondays to Fridays, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Lead time for orders is 3 working days.)


PUNLAAN graduates become employed in hotels and restaurants.

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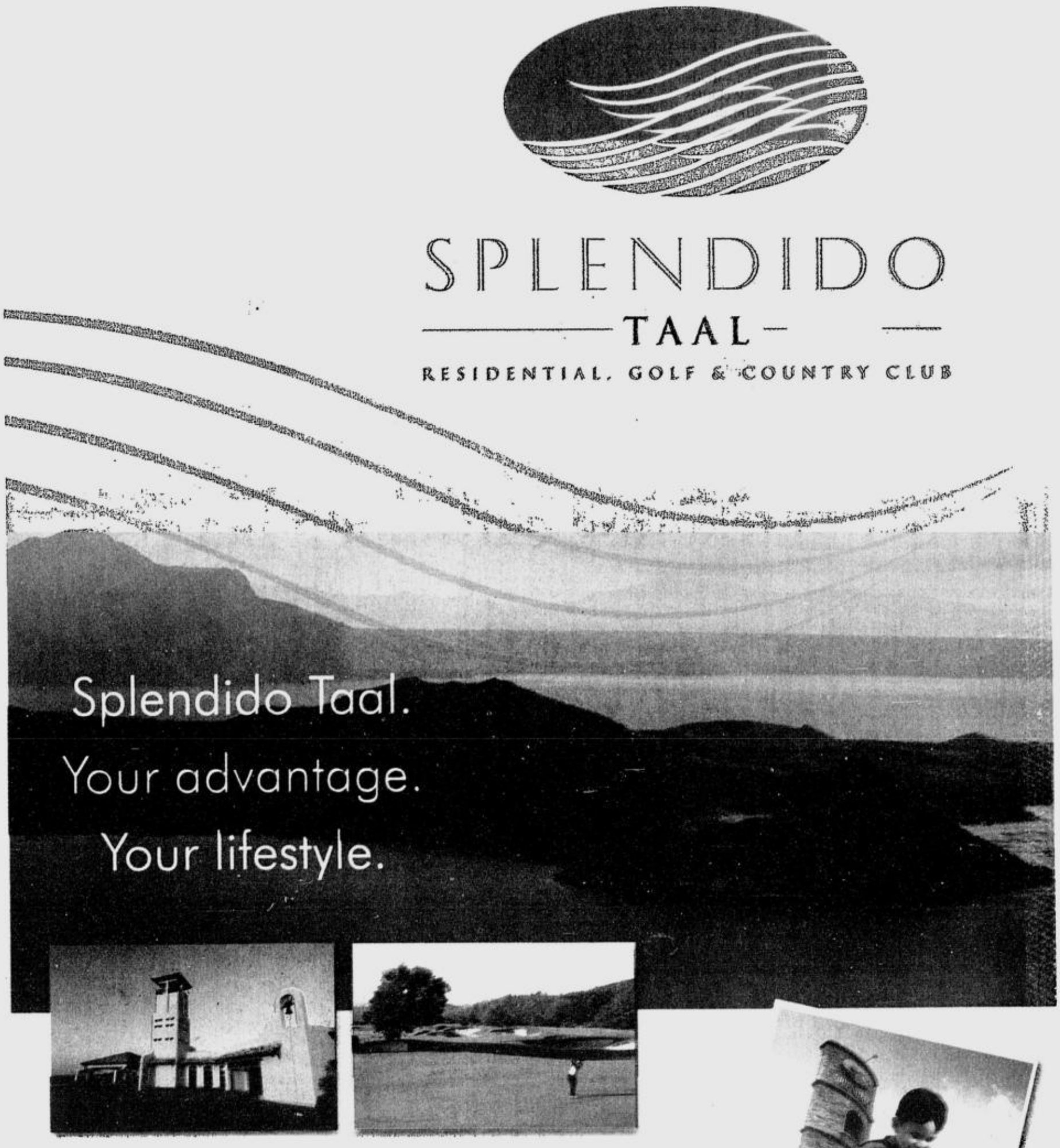

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Editor Aries Espinosa

Shop at the Shang and win a Volvo

GET INTO THE SPIRIT OF THE SEASON as premier lifestyle mall Shangri-La Plaza lines up fabulous finds and great shopping rewards just for you. Inspired by the time-honored tradition of gift giving, the holidays are a reason for indulging ourselves and those on our Christmas lists.

Score marvelous gifts and upscale items from the Shang's extensive array of shops and brands that bring together the best in fashion, beauty and luxury. Find everything you and your loved ones could wish for and enjoy a shopping experience that only the top lifestyle destination can provide.

Shop at the Shang from Nov. 30, 2007 to Feb. 3, 2008, and get a chance to drive away in a brand-new Volvo C30 2.4L Sports Coupe and four Samsung 42-inch Plasma TVs. Every P2000 purchase in a single receipt, cash or card, from any Shangri-La Plaza retail partner, entitles the customer to a raffle coupon.

The preliminary draws are on Dec. 19, Jan. 9, 2008, Jan 16 and Feb. 6. Get to win more than once as preliminary draw winners still get a shot at winning the Volvo C30 2.4L Sports Coupe during the grand raffle draw on Feb. 16.

The holidays are bound to be merrier if you let the Shang take care of your shopping needs and maybe, if you're lucky, a luxury ride home!

Shangri-la Plaza is located at the corner of Edsa and Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City. For more information, call 633-7851 to 70, or log on to www.shangrila-plaza.com.

DE CASTRO, MISS EARTH INAUGURATE ST. FRANCIS DEPARTMENT STORE

Vice President Noli de Castro (center) cuts the ceremonial ribbon during the inauguration of St. Francis Department Store at the Ortigas Center in Mandaluyong City recently. He is shown assisted by (from left) Miss Earth Jessica Trisko of Canada, Miss Air Pooja Chitgopeker of India, and Miss Fire Angela Gomez of Spain. Also shown are ABS group president Luke Roxas and De Castro's chief of staff Jessie Andres.

Cilostazol prevents stroke recurrence

LONG-TERM USE OF THE DRUG cilostazol (Pletaal) post-stroke reduced the risk of stroke recurrence, according to a large-scale study conducted in Japan.

The Cilostazol Stroke Prevention Study (CSPS) found that 100 mg cilostazol taken twice a day prevented stroke recurrence among patients who have had a previous stroke.

"Long-term administration of cilostazol significantly prevented the recurrence of cerebral infarction by 41.7 percent compared to placebo", said lead study investigator Dr. Fumio Gotoh of the Department of Neurology, School of Medicine, Keio University in Tokyo, Japan. The result of the study showed that antiplatelet agents like cilostazol are a good option for the prevention of stroke.

To further develop and test the efficacy of cilostazol, researchers are conducting an ongoing study known as CAIST or Cilostazol in Acute Ischemic Stroke Treatment. The study aims to compare the efficacy and safety of cilostazol with aspirin in the treatment of acute stroke. The said clinical trial started in Korea in January 2006 and is expected to be completed in the last quarter of this year.

Latest data from the Philippine Journal of Neurology show that the prevalence of stroke in the Philippines is 486 out of 100,000 of the population. According to the Stroke Society of the Philippines, majority of strokes are preventable. Lifestyle modification is a key element to prevent stroke.

Aside from stroke prevention, cilostazol is also used to reduce symptoms of intermittent claudication-a cramping sensation in the legs as a result of decreased blood supply to the lower extremities.

The addition of cilostazol as a stroke medication is welcome news to all Filipinos, especially those who are under stroke treatment. Cilostazol (Pletaal) is a prescription drug and patients need a doctor's recommendation for its use.

Patients should be protected from risk of secondary stroke and the experience with Cilostazol (Pletaal) as an anti-platelet is supported by evidence-based trials for more than 10 years. It is the innovator that provides trusted and proven efficacy and long-term safety compared to other generic equivalents.

For information on stroke issues and prevention, call the customer hotline at 811-4723 for GMA/Metro Manila or 1-800-1888-4723 for provincial calls.

AYALA LAND SPREADS CHRISTMAS CHEERS

It's an early Christmas treat for the Makati Central Business District as Ayala Land, together with its partners Globe, Jollibee, and the Makati Social Welfare and Development Group, spread the Christmas cheers through Little Voices of Cheer featuring the children from the Makati Public Schools. The series of shows started Nov. 17 and continues every weekend until Dec. 22 in Glorietta, Greenbelt, Salcedo Market as well as in office buildings 6750 and Tower One & Exchange Plaza.

As the million stars shine brightly at night in the Makati Central Business District, the little voices of cheer will warm the hearts of people working and shopping in the MCBD. Stars of hope, joy, love and optimism will fill the air as well as the heart of everyone. Come together this season and live up to the real meaning of Christmas. Next performances will be on Dec. 15 at the Salcedo Market, Dec. 16 at Glorietta 3, and Dec. 22 at Greenbelt 3.

'HOLD ON TIGHT' LAUNCH

Drawing on her own memories of raising her firstborn child, Peachy Concepcion celebrates a mother's love with her first picture book 'Hold On Tight' illustrated in full color by Joel Chua. The author's wistful narrative resonates with the love and hope that every parent feels about letting a child grow and letting go. 'Hold On Tight' is a tribute to the timeless love that binds a parent to child and child to parent. 'Hold On Tight' was launched by Select Two Corp Dec. 10 at the Urdaneta Village Friendship Hall.

SHFC posts P544M in community mortgage program

THE SOCIAL HOUSING FINANCE CORP (SHFC) REPORTS THAT FROM JANUARY TO OCTOBER this year, more than P544 million were released under its community mortgage program (CMP). This figure came about from 121 approved projects that benefited more than 200 families nationwide. The CMP is a government financing facility administered by the SHFC. It provides collective loan payable for a maximum of 25 years at an annual interest rate of six percent to a duly-registered community association (CA). This scheme is applicable in the acquisition of the land CAs presently occupy or to where they will be relocated. The program is aligned with the thrust of the office of the vice president and the concerns of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC) in shelter financing for the urban poor. This is also an opportunity that empowers a particular community toward micro-enterprise development; capability building; shelter sector and basic infrastructure services; and program efficiency in urban poor home loans. More details on CMP are available at the Public Affairs Department of SHFC, 750-6337 to 50 loc. 821.

UE Knights induction, Christmas party set Dec. 15

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE EAST (UE) Knights Inc's (Ueki) induction ceremonies for its new set of officers, mass oath taking for new members and Christmas party will be held on Dec. 15, 6 p.m. at the Alegria Room, Manila Pavilion Hotel, UN Avenue, Ermita, Manila. Senate President Manuel B. Villar is the guest of honor and inducting officer.

The newly elected Ueki officers are: lawyer Danilo O. Mendez, national commander; Eduardo R. Nicolas III, 1st vice commander; Gen. Enrique S. Atanacio, 2nd vice commander; Ronald M. Uychitin, 3rd vice commander; Cornelio L. Marcelino, national adjutant; lawyer Lilito R. Perdido, national treasurer; Col. Rodolfo G. Masiddo, assistant national treasurer; Gen. Lysias C. Cabusao, business manager; Gen. Arsenio M. Torres, national auditor; Judge Augustus C. Diaz, Judge advocate general; Gen. Roberto L. Calinisan, press relations officer; Anthony U. Que, chair of the board of directors; Col. Albino Sablayan Jr, Antonio A. Cua Jr, Luisito Padilla, Nicandro B. Marcelo and Napoleon E. Liong, directors.

In keeping with this year's theme, "Keep the Fire Burning", Ueki secretary general, Col. Renato S. Chan enjoins all Ueki brothers and sisters to attend this event preferably attired in red smart casual. For details and inquiries, call the UE Alumni Association Inc (UEAAI) secretariat at 735-8557, 735-5471 local 310 (Aileen), 313-0747, 734-9597 (Col. Renato Chan); 527-5028 (Gen. Roberto Calinisan).

EASTERN TELECOM EMPLOYEES UNION, MANAGEMENT SIGN NEW CBA IN 9 MEETINGS

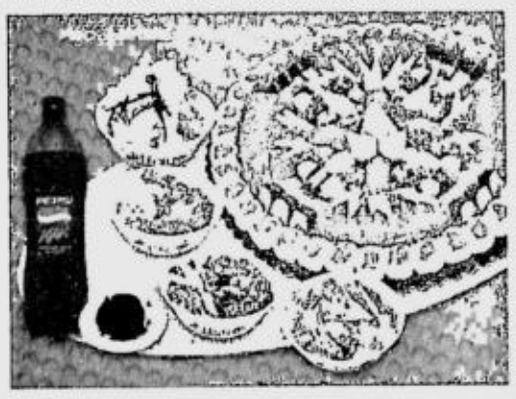
The 2007-2010 collective bargaining agreement between the employees union (ETEU) and management of Eastern Telecom was signed recently. Present at the momentous event held at Equitable PCI Bank's Sign of the Anvil in Makati City Nov. 22 were Eastern Telecom president Eric O. Recto, senior executives of the company and the key representatives of the employees union (ETEU) led by its president and union panel chair Crisostomo Manallo, vice chair Michael Peralta with panel members Abraham Tamayao, Christian Manalo, Gil Amable Torres, Michael Dela Vega and Francis de Borja. The Eastern Telecom management panel was, in turn, represented by EVP and chair Alvin Tolentino, vice chair Rene Castillo with members Albert Tuason, Ma. Cristina Bonifacio, and Jennifer Pasia. The CBA was sealed in just 9 meetings without the presence of external counsel from either side. Eastern Telecom is the country's longest standing telecommunications company that built the first link to the world. Shown, from left, are Raul Pagdanganan, Christina Bonifacio, Jocelyn Dy Juanco, Tamayao, Pasia, Castillo, Torres, Tolentino, Manallo, Recto, Peralta, Tuason, Dela Vega and Manalo.

Kitaro's Party Trays and packages-perfect for the holidays

ORDERING KITARO'S PARTY trays for your gatherings and meetings is the healthy way to meet or celebrate specially during the holiday season.

Instead of the usual fare such as the greasy pansit and the cholesterol-laden pizzas, go Japanese this time and experience a guilt-free Christmas food celebration.

You have choices of regular and special, big and small All-Maki Feast, All California Maki Feast, All Sashimi, and the combinations (Shogun and Samurai).



Kitaro has also developed the party starters which are mini versions of the popular party trays. These are all available at all outlets of Kitaro, the award winning Japanese casual dining resto-chain.

Kitaro branches are located at Aguirre, Angeles, Maysilo-Boni, Burgundy, Commonwealth, De la Costa, Dela Rosa Carpark Two, East Avenue, Emerald-F. Ortigas Jr,, Export Bank-Makati, Las Piñas, Manila Plaza, Marquinton, Medical City, Petron Dasmarinas Village, Petron LakeShore, Podium, River Banks, RCBC Plaza, Robinsons Manila, Robinsons East, Robinsons Pioneer, Shaw, SM Baguio, Sgt. Esguerra near ABS-CBN, SM Bicutan, SM Manila, SM Mall of Asia, SM Marilao, SM Pampanga, Shangri-La Plaza, Shopwise-Sucat, Taft near corner Vito Cruz(in front of La Salle), Tandang Sora, Valero, Vito Cruz near corner Metropolitan Avenue, Walter Mart-Makati and White Plains.

Let's get the party started for as low as P650 for the party starters and P1170 for the party trays. For those who want a complete party package, Kitaro has prepared three sets for you to choose from:

Set A-Budget for 10 persons for P2,000 (P200/head) consisting of a mini party tray, 10 rice meals, 2 Pepsi 1.5 L and 10 fruit jello. Set B-Affordable for 10 for P2,600 (P260) which has a samurai party starter, 10 bento boxes, 2 Pepsi 1.5L and 10 mango panna cotta. Set C- Blowout for 30 for P9,000 (P300) made up of big 30 rice toppings, 3 Pepsi 1.5 L and 30 chocolate cakes,

For deliveries, call hotline 911-1115. Credit cards are accepted at selected outlets.

Discovery Suites' Christmas Three package

DISCOVERY SUITES ONCE AGAIN OFFERS ITS POPULAR CHRISTMAS THREE PACKAGE FROM Dec. 8 to 30, and Jan. 1 to 12. Favored by local residents, the Christmas Three package allows guests to spend a glorious three-night stay at Discovery Suites for only P8,888++ for a Junior Suite, or P9,999++ for a one-bedroom suite. Christmas Three package is inclusive of complimentary breakfast for two persons at Serendipity Lounge, access to the swimming pool and Balance Lifestyle and Fitness Gym, complimentary WiFi Internet at Restaurant 5 and the Serendipity Lounge, complimentary parking and free newspapers for the duration of their stay. For inquiries and reservations, call Discovery Suites at 683-8369/683-8396 or 683-8222.

Satisfy that urge with Brother's Burger GCs

RUNNING OUT OF GIFT IDEAS? EASY does it with Brothers Burger.

Shorten that long Christmas gift list and give the gift of premium beefy goodness with Brothers Burger's gift certificates. After an overload of quezo de bola, ham, roast chicken, and potato salad, your family and friends will surely welcome the premium taste of Brothers Burger's designer burgers. It's one Christmas gift your loved ones won't forget.

Gift certificates are conveniently available at any Brothers Burger outlet at P100 and P500 denominations.

For more details, approach any of Brothers Burger's friendly crew members, or call 891-1781, or log on to www.brothersburger.com.ph

Helping students learn real world hospitality in the classrooms

THE CENTER FOR HOSPITALITY ARTS Management Philippines (CHAMP) continues to strengthen its status in the hospitality industry with its graduates now being the leading choice among employment agencies and for on-the-job (OJT) programs of various companies in related fields.

CHAMP attributes this achievement to the hands-on and skills training they implement for students in a "laboratory" setting, which are actual venues such as the front desk, kitchen, guest rooms, dining area, bar of a restaurant and not simulated in a classroom. This is in order for students to learn more about the rudiments of hospitality management in a "real world" setting. These labs are part of the hotel, Champ Hostel and Seven Suites Hotel Observatory.

"Our edge over other training schools is CHAMP's handing out of certificates for every module and OJT they finish, which they can then use when looking for employment. We offer a modular type of program which enables a student to take as many modules as they need," said assistant school director Ronald Dexter Antiporda. He added that the school has a "ladderized" program that allows students taking up a three-month course to extend this into a one or two-year courses.

On the other hand, the school itself is dedicated to providing job assistance to students, via manpower agency partners and affiliates who are always confident to refer graduates from CHAMP for local or overseas employment. Students don't even need to look for OJT venues since the OJT program is conducted on-site with CHAMP's affiliates such as Cravings, The Coffee Beanery, Champ Hostel, Seven Suites, C3 Events Place and Restaurant, and Orange Place Apartelle. This is another advantage of CHAMP over other Tesda-accredited schools in hospitality management.

"During these OJT programs, CHAMP students receive such benefits as monetary allowances, training in real-life situations, and even opportunities to get training abroad. These programs further prepare students for the real world, while practicing important work ethics and values which are needed in the hospitality industry," said Mr. Antiporda.

CHAMP offers a wide range of courses, including a short three-month course (Certificate of Competency), to one-year (Certificate in Hotel and Restaurant Operations) and two-year courses. The two-year course already entitles a graduate to a Diploma in Hospitality Management—an added advantage for those seeking to work in a shorter amount of time.

The school can also formulate a custom-fit package of training programs for other institutions requiring training for the following fields: Personality development, sanitation and safety standards, stewarding and waste management, commercial cookery, food and beverage service, bar operations, banquet operations, front office operations, housekeeping, baking and pastry, and barista training.

Center for Hospitality Arts Management Philippines is located at 26 Kamias Road Quezon City. For queries, call 9282641 / 9281246 or visit www.schoolchamp.edu.ph.

THE SCHOOL is dedicated to providing job assistance to students.

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	15.75%	5.92%	10.51%	34.21%	78.79%

*Based on a 12-month return from July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007. The rates of return shown above do not guarantee future performance. The actual return may differ. These investment funds are specific to variable life insurance contracts and are not considered mutual funds. Life insurance products are regulated by the Insurance Commission.

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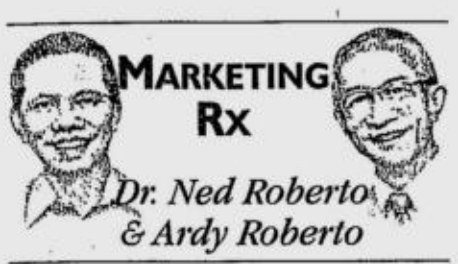
BUSINESS Friday

'Should we manage our customers as though they were our service staff?



Q: WE'RE IN THE SEMI-FINE DI-ning but also somewhat fast-food restaurant business. That's the pizza, Japanese, Chinese fast-food dine-in restaurant business. So I'm not referring to the home delivery portion of our business. I sent one of my newer marketing managers to your service marketing seminar. One of the ideas she echoed to us was a concept from you about how to manage our restaurant customers: in service marketing we should manage our customers as though they are our service staff. Her explanation of what that meant wasn't that clear to us. But we all thought the idea may be worth doing something about it if it turns out to be of real value to customers. Could you explain?

A: This is a crucial concept especially for those of you who are serious about customer satisfaction.

First, the concept does not apply to all types of service. The type we're applying the concept to is one of Christopher Lovelock's four service categories. That's the high contact and high audience size type of service. That's the type of service your restaurant renders.

To clarify, contact is about the amount of time customers spent "front stage" and "backstage" in the service venue or outlet. On the other hand, audience size refers to the number of customers receiving the service simultaneously.

For some perspective, under these two criteria, the other three service categories in addition to the type your restaurant is in, would be the following:

The low contact and low audience size service category. An illustrative and defining example would be a car repair and tune-up service.

The high contact but low audience size service category. Legal service and physician service are clarifying examples.

The low contact but high audience size service category. Illustrative examples would be the insurance service and public utility service.

In the category of service where your restaurant belongs, there is continuing contact of your customers with the three defining components of a service as a product. Customers "interact" with your service staff, your service venue and facilities, and your service processing.

The service marketing literature tells us that the satisfying service comes from a satisfying service staff, a satisfying service venue and facilities, and a satisfying service processing. In a previous column, we showed that these three can sometimes be "multiplicatively" related so that if customers are unhappy with one, they become unhappy overall. [e.g. 10 (quality of food served) x 10 (ambience) x 0 (slow service) = 0 happiness rating.]

Just last week, an organization held their event at a five-star Makati hotel ballroom. The food was excellent. A 10. The hotel ambience and event set-up was excellent—it was a 10. But the service was so bad and slow that by the time the luncheon event was over, food was still being served and many of the guests at the event left for their afternoon appointments without being fed. The result: a big fat ZERO rating overall for the customer happiness index. The service industry is tough. You've got to get everything right—especially when you're serving "five-star customers."

> 'The service industry is tough ... you've got to get everything right'

Unforgiving customers

These are what we called "unforgiving" customers. Western service customers are characteristically unforgiving. So are most high net worth or Class AB customers in the Philippines. But our research has revealed that most Filipino customers are the "forgiving" type. Among customers in *carinderia* in particular, the not-so-clean venue and facilities and even a not-so-fast service processing are tolerated and not resented. Where customers are more sensitive and take a near unforgiving posture is with a disappointing or irritating service staff.

There's much to learn from understanding why this happens to be the case.

To start with, the essence of service interaction is personal. And that's with the service staff. There's not much interaction to speak of with the service venue and facilities. That's why two paragraphs ago, we place the word interact in quotation marks. Customers come in contact with the restaurant dining tables but tables don't respond to that contact. As to service processing, the interaction is again via the service staff doing the service processing. It is this primacy of the service staff that is behind what we often hear from service professionals when they say: "Service inheres in, and is embodied by the person rendering it."

Next, think now of simultaneity of service production and consumption in the service category you're in. As your service staff are producing your food service and servicing, your customers are consuming that service and servicing. What does this imply about your concern for customer satisfaction?

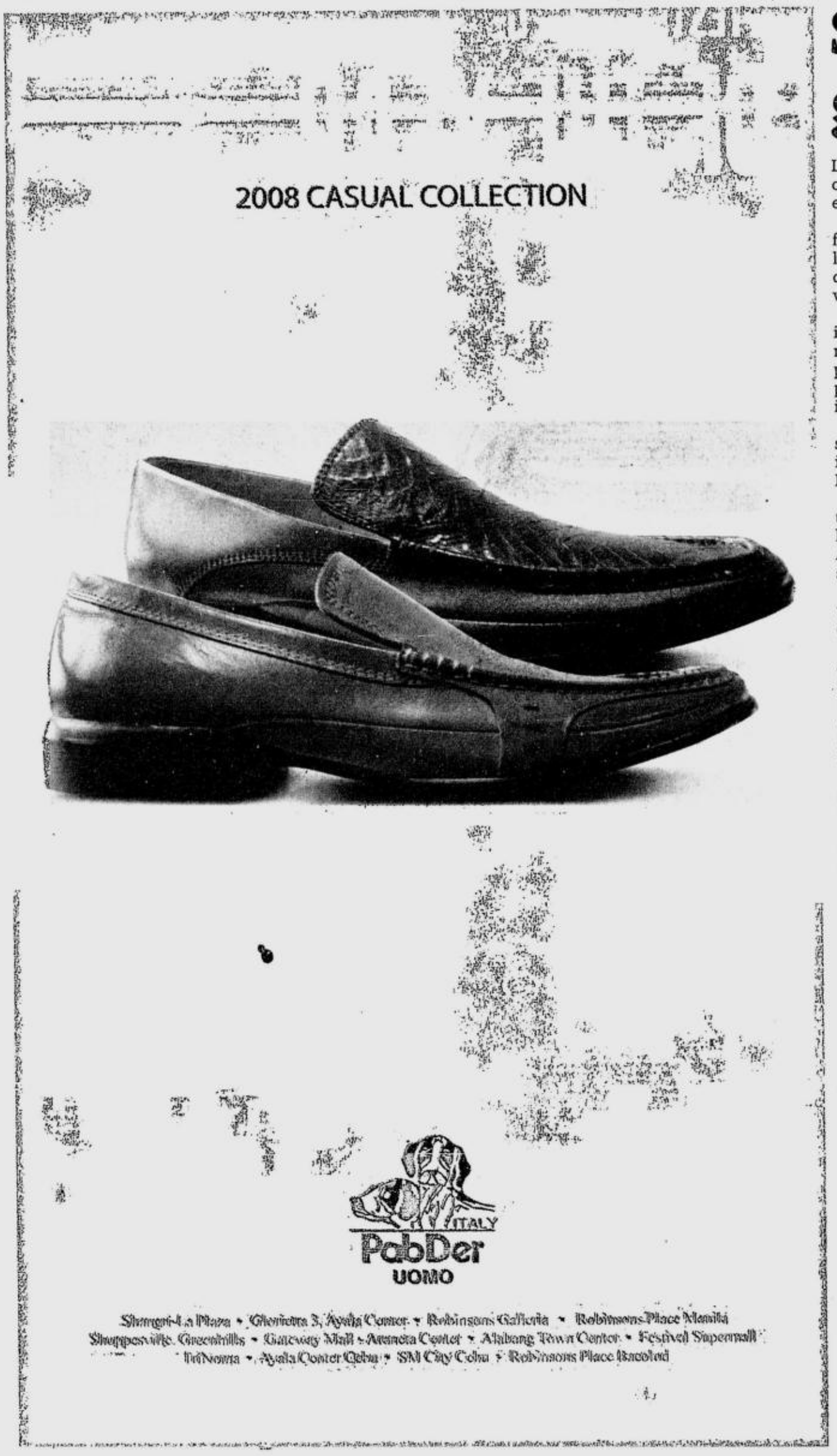
Opportunity: customer participation

The more participation you can arrange for your customers to partake in the service production and consumption process, the wider the window of opportunity for customer satisfaction. It also follows that the greater will be the likelihood of a higher order of satisfaction being realized. That's basically saying that there will be more customers satisfied and the greater will the satisfaction be per customer. Customer participation will do all those.

Of course the practical question is in what ways can customers participate in the service production and processing? In the QSR (quick service restaurant) or fast-food industry, McDonald's sets the pioneering record. For example, it opens its kitchen to the viewing of customers. Every so often it invites selected customers to visit and tour the kitchen. And even if it's a fast-food outlet, it allows customers who wish to request, to get their burger patty done, say extra well and so on. But it is in the Japanese fine dining restaurants that we witness fuller customer participation raised to an art form. In the hibatchi table, the Japanese chef prepares and cooks the steak right in front of the customers. The set-up also allows customers to every now and then give cooking instructions to the chef who responds accordingly.

All these are clearly concrete and specific ways of managing your customers as though they are your service staff. These are all done in the name of satisfying and delighting customers.

Keep your questions coming. Send them to MarketingRx@pldtDSL.net. God bless!



Stressed Britons flee gloom for laid-back life

LONDON—ANNE DARWIN MAY BE THE one who hit the headlines, but Britons are emigrating in droves.

Darwin, 55, who returned last weekend from Panama to face charges of deception linked to her husband's "return from the dead" five years after a canoeing accident, was one of record numbers who are leaving.

All have different motivation—and there is no suggestion of criminality for most—but while stories about immigrants pouring into Britain feature daily across the pages of British newspapers, less attention is paid to the number who quit.

The latest official migration figures showed that while 591,000 people arrived in Britain last year, a record high of 207,000 Britons left for sunnier climes.

High levels of crime, dreary weather, bad transport and expensive accommodation helped drive Christopher Khalil to Sydney, Australia, said the 33-year-old from Rhyl, a seaside town in north Wales.

Australia, where the former superpower used to send its criminals, is the number one destination of choice.

"It's a new world out here—the sun shines every day, the beaches are beautiful, it's cheaper to live, salaries are approaching UK ones and you can live an amazing outdoor lifestyle," Khalil, who now works for an Australian digital media company, told Reuters by e-mail.

"There seem to be new people arriving every week in search of a better life and better opportunities," he said.

One-third of last year's emigrants headed to Australia and New Zealand, a quarter went to Spain and France and just under one in 10 to the United States. Only about 1,000 British passport-holders live in Panama, according to the Institute for Public Policy Research, a left-wing think tank.

"Increasing pressure at work and demands on time in the UK, coupled with increased focus on importance of leisure time, mean that more people are probably considering various quality-of-life issues than they used to—such as climate, cost of living, value for money, transport facilities and recreational activities," said Neil Prothero, UK analyst at the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU).

Hunt for happiness

Britain languished in 29th place in an EIU "quality of life" survey, coming bottom among the 15 countries of the pre-enlargement European Union. Australia, Spain and New Zealand ranked 6th, 10th and 15th, respectively.

Darwin's husband John "was forever looking at new things and new places on the Internet and one day he just came up with Panama," she told the Daily Mirror.

"Brits leave the UK to escape, because they want to enjoy a happy, carefree life again," said Anne Butt, a British nurse who moved to New Zealand.

"After living in London for two years, I was in need of a break from the seriousness of life in the capital," she added.

"For young families especially, the chance to raise a family in a safe, out-of-doors, sporty country, where your income allows you a more enjoyable standard of living is very attractive." The old settler colonies of Australia and New Zealand promise a warmer climate, open landscapes and relaxed lifestyle—without requiring new arrivals to learn a foreign language.

In addition, a shortage of skilled labor and aging populations have prompted both countries to recruit abroad.

"I know as many Brits as Kiwis (New Zealanders)," said Butt.

"As a skilled migrant—a nurse—New Zealand immigration are very welcoming to applications for residency, so it's not really a surprise that I work with so many Brits."

La belle vie

And while rising numbers of eastern and central Europeans are coming to live in Britain—92,000 arrived in 2006, of which three-quarters were Polish—more Britons are moving to Europe, also taking advantage of European Union freedoms.

Spain and France are the top EU destinations, promising cheap wine, a relaxed lifestyle and warmer weather.

A spate of television programs and newspaper columns on travel, life abroad and property restoration has promoted the idyllic vision of leaving polluted, stressful British cities and investing in a French vineyard or Spanish villa.

"Far more families are coming over here to settle here now, lured by low-cost travel but also by the numerous TV features and other stories in the British press which have jumped on the bandwagon of selling Brits the 'French dream'," said Miranda Neames, editor of French News, an English-language monthly newspaper for Francophiles.

Helen Thorpe, who moved to a country house in southern France a year ago, said she now grows her own fruit and vegetables and shops at the local market.

"A lot of English people come here because it is rather like the England of say 25 years ago; seemingly less crime, people having more time for each other," she said. Also, "the plot is much larger than we would have been able to afford in Britain." But the dream of escape does not always work out, and many Britons eventually return.

"Many find out sooner or later that the climate's definitely better but the life isn't necessarily more relaxed especially when the language barrier takes its toll," said Lucy Brown, of Spanish-living.com, a web site aimed at English-speaking expats.

"I hear of just as many people returning to the UK because they can't cope with the Spanish system, can't find work, life is much more difficult than they imagined or they miss family, friends," said Brown, who lives in Marbella.

In Anne Darwin's case, it was having a living husband after all—who was missing his sons—that put paid to the dream of a new life.

Reuters

BUSINESS Friday

E-mail: business@inquirer.com.ph
Website: www.inquirer.net/business

Get to know China's rich

Top three status symbols: Job positions, private club memberships and property ownership

ZHANG DAKANG LOOKS CHIC IN HIS NEW ARMANI SUIT and will never miss a meeting—not with his new Rolex Submariner, but the real proof of his wealth and status is evident in the cards he keeps in his Louis Vuitton wallet.

For the affluent in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, the top three status symbols are senior job positions, private club memberships and property ownership, according to the HSBC China Affluent Study.

In these three mainland cities, data from MasterCard Worldwide show the estimated number of 1.13 million affluent households earning more than $25,000 annually in 2005 is forecast to swell to over 3.9 million in 2015. Similarly, discretionary spending at $6.9 billion in 2005 is expected to balloon to $54.9 billion in 2015.

New wealth in mainland China's major cities is powering spending, lifestyle choices and mind-set changes among affluent consumers. HSBC's survey with MasterCard Worldwide, shows a high proportion of the affluent purchasing luxury brands, traveling for leisure, dining out and joining prestigious clubs. The affluent also make a variety of investments with real estate as a clear top choice. On aspirations, they prize career success highly and want to start their own business.

Fudan University in Shanghai was commissioned to design and implement the survey in the three mainland cities, where about 550 in-depth interviews were conducted.

Profile of the affluent

The findings show that the affluent in mainland China are impressively young with an average age of 38 (22 percent under age 30 and 64 percent between 31 and 46), predominately male (76 percent) and married (67 percent; among them 77 percent have children). Forty-seven percent earn $25,600—US$38,500 per year and are well-educated (half are degree holders and 33 percent possess a master's degree or above) with many of whom having had overseas exposure (46 percent).

Status symbols

The number one symbol of social status for China's affluent is holding senior job positions (43 percent), followed by private club membership (30 percent), property ownership (30 percent), a high level of education (29 percent) and private car ownership (20 percent). It is therefore not surprising that close to half of the wealthy respondents aspire to a promotion or to advance in their career. Over one-third aspires to start their own business and a quarter would like to see their investments yield higher returns.

"China's affluent class consists of well-educated, well-traveled professionals who will accumulate wealth through career advancement in a fast-growing economy where expertise and skills are highly valued. They aspire to reach the top of the corporate ladder because their title and position bring prestige and influence. On the other hand, many in China, especially in Guangzhou, had made their money as entrepreneurs and so we will continue to see people aspiring to build wealth by making their own businesses succeed," said Peter Wong, HSBC's executive director for Hong Kong and Mainland China.

Lifestyle choices

The survey confirmed the popular belief that China's new rich pamper themselves with branded luxury items. In the survey, 92 percent have bought luxury watches, clothes and leather accessories, among which 85 percent are for self-consumption. They obtain information about luxury brands mainly through fashion magazines (63 percent), business magazines (46 percent) and retail stores (42 percent). However, only 14 percent of China's new rich buys luxury items to enhance social status while close to half choose luxury goods for their good quality.

Overseas traveling for leisure is also a popular pastime (76 percent), and although the highest percentage (53 percent) have traveled to Asian destinations such as Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, Thailand and Japan, the number of people going to Europe (25 percent) and North America (13 percent) is catching up.

Seventy percent of the respondents own sports club memberships, with 29 percent of them playing golf (32 percent with business partners) at an average of 1.55 times per month. Dining out with family, business associates and coworkers is also becoming a regular activity for the wealthy in China. On average, the affluent dine out 4 times in a week, with over half of which being business lunches or dinners.

Yuwa Hedrick-Wong, economic advisor of MasterCard Worldwide in Asia/Pacific, who worked with HSBC to conceptualize the study, remarked, "Private consumption in mainland China has been growing at around 12 percent annually in the past seven years. This has led to the emergence of a critical mass of affluent households that are transforming China's consumer markets. The HSBC China Affluent Study validates that for China's affluent, consumption has changed from providing basic necessities to becoming a means of self-expression, a mark of distinction, and an affirmation of self-esteem and achievement."

Symbols of wealth

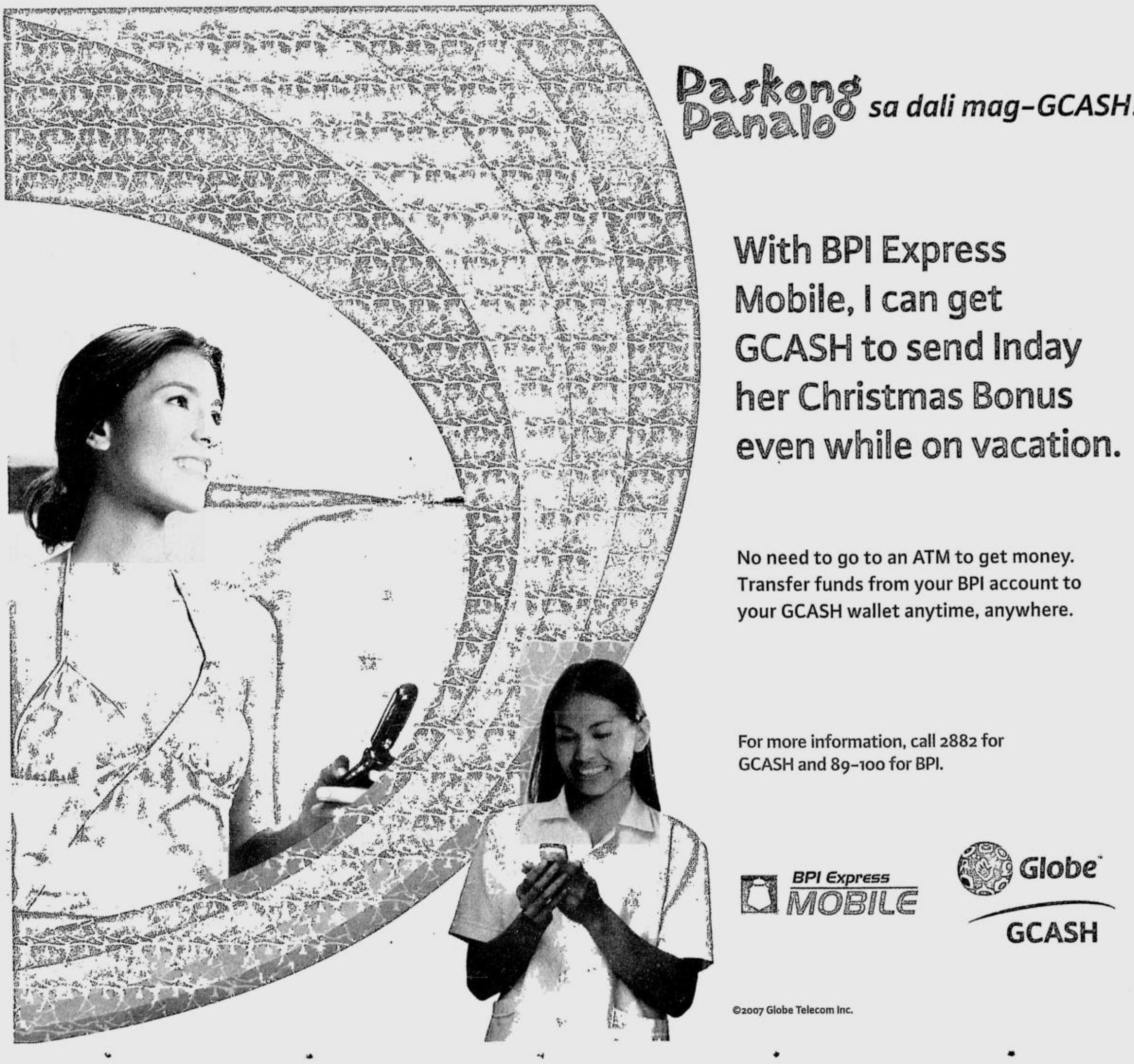
Property ownership ranks as the 3rd top status symbol among the affluent in the survey. All the affluent across the three cities own properties and all of them bought their first property by 2000. Sixty-five percent own a second property, while 26 percent and 8 percent own three and four properties respectively. Property accounts for the largest proportion of their asset pool (44 percent), with bank savings trailing behind at 22 percent. Of the 75 percent of respondents that hold investments, 65 percent say that property is the most popular investment, followed by domestic stocks (35 percent) and fixed RMB deposits (34 percent).

"We are seeing a new generation of lifestyle consumers in the Mainland with huge appetites for properties, luxury consumption and investments. They present a wide range of opportunities for different businesses, including financial services. The survey findings show that although the affluent do invest, not a lot of them have actually sought financial advice from professionals. The majority are still limited in their exposure to and sophistication in financial planning. This is clearly a gap that HSBC as the leading foreign bank in China, is well-poised to bridge," added Wong.

At present, HSBC has a total of 23 premier outlets in the Mainland to service the wealth management needs of the bank's affluent customers, and has opened its first Premier subbranch in Beijing earlier this month.

Affluent Profile

76% are male
22% are under age 30, 64% are between 31 and 46; average age is 38
67% are married, and among them 77% have children
50% are university undergraduates, and 33% have postgraduate degrees
47% earn US$25,600-US$38,500 a year
Over 82% are employed full-time, 15% are self-employed or free lancers
46% have overseas exposure/experience



MOBILE EXPANDS ROLE IN ADVERTISING

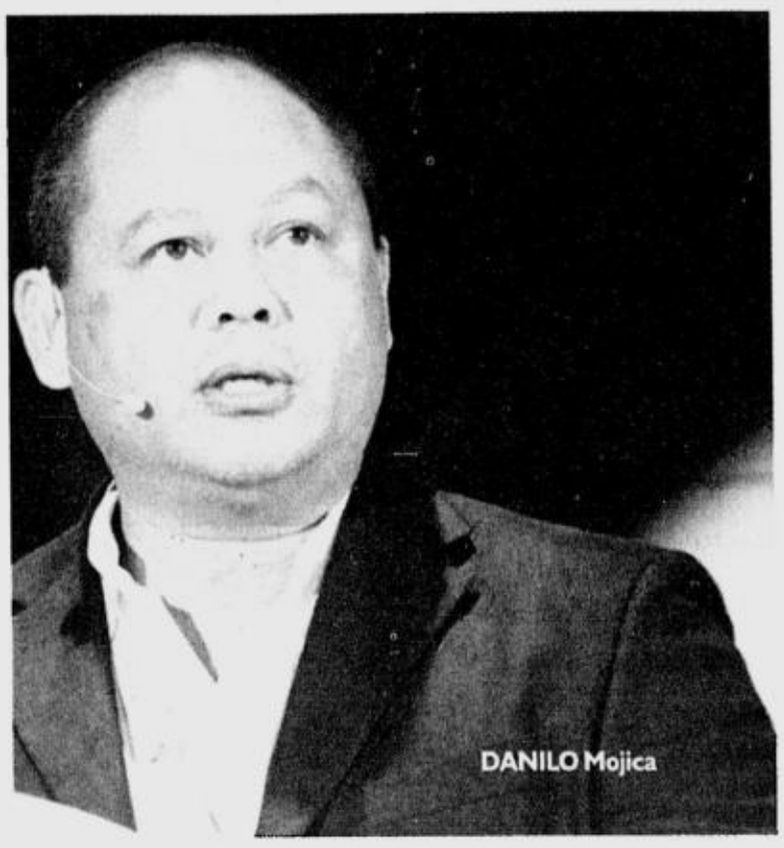
Consumer engagement via cell phone

IS THE AVERAGE, SMS-savvy Filipino, who sleeps and wakes up with his cell phone within arm's reach, ready to receive advertisements via his mobile phone?

The country's largest mobile operator, Smart Communications Inc. (Smart)—with over 28 million subscribers as of end-September—says yes. Smart's chief marketing man described the emerging trend of advertising via mobile phones to delegates of the recently held 20th Philippine Advertising Congress (Ad Congress) in Subic, Zambales.

Themed "The New Order," this year's Ad Congress highlighted the huge potential of new media, such as the Internet and mobile, as a way to effectively and efficiently deliver brand messages.

The sheer explosion in mobile ownership—with over 50 million actively subscribed mobile users in the country—and the greater depth of consumer engagement which could be achieved via mobile, have led to the medium becoming the single most powerful platform in delivering brand messages, according to Danilo J. Mojica, head of Smart's wireless consumer division.


DANILO Mojica

Engaging consumers

The huge potential of mobile advertising, an industry predicted to explode into a billion-dollar global industry in just a few years, has not been lost to advertisers.

"With the cell phone, you know the user. And it is 'always on'. In TV parlance, it is always prime time, with no channel surfing. When you send a message via SMS or MMS to a subscriber, you engage him in an intimate, direct and personal way. It is interactive advertising that can generate a response or drive a sale, and is immediately measurable," Mojica said.

"Unlike traditional media, mobile advertising allows for 25/8 mobility. It has the potential to provide location targeting and time-specific messages. Do you want to catch a consumer just as he is entering a mall to figure out where to have a quick lunch? No other medium will hold him captive at just that moment of decision making. It's a one-to-one relationship, not a passive, mass-produced, one-size-fits-all medium where the broadcaster dictates what, when, and where to give the message to its mass media audience," he added.

Tit for tat

But is the Filipino consumer ready to receive ads on his cell phone?

"Our research shows that 74 percent of subscribers are interested in receiving ads through their mobile phones, specifically about discounts, raffles and tips on specific topics of interest. Those who are open to raffle ads prefer to register via SMS at 94 percent vs. only 4 percent for the traditional drop box," Mojica said.

The prospect of receiving incentives like free calls, load, downloadable stuff, among others, makes the idea of accepting mobile ads more appealing to consumers, according to Mojica. In exchange for these incentives, they are willing to share information valuable to any advertiser's relationship marketing program.

Paving the way

In a sign of the operator's serious intent to jumpstart mobile advertising in the country, Smart has invested in state-of-the-art systems that are expected to drive the company's mobile advertising efforts.

From European firm 3ple-Media, Smart has acquired Mercury™, a robust, high-performing, and award-winning technology that allows the cellular operator to harness the richness of multimedia messaging as a compelling tool in the delivery of mobile ads.

Through a platform acquired from US-based Zad Mobile Inc., Smart subscribers will be sent only the ads that are meaningful, relevant, and interesting to them. They will be provided value and incentives in exchange for their participation. Most importantly, subscribers are assured of privacy and complete control over the choice whether to receive advertisements or not.

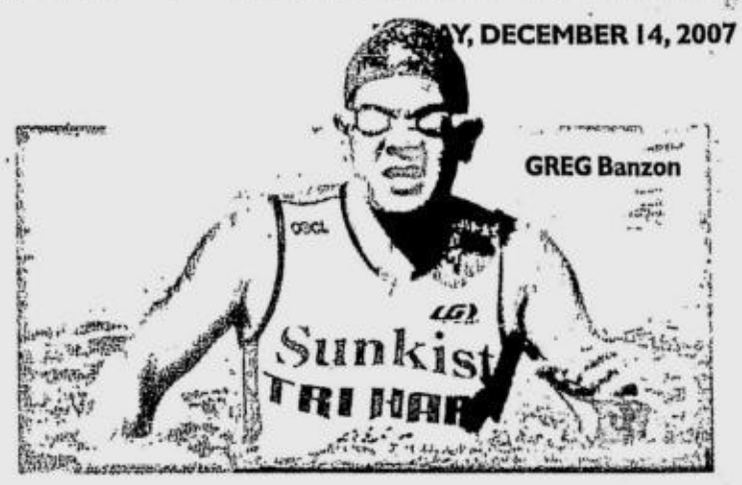
Recently, the country was put in the global mobile advertising radar when the GSM Association awarded Smart and Zad Mobile's "1-in-5 Panalo" promo as Best Mobile Advertising. The promo was implemented for the cola brand Pepsi.

Mobile with traditional

Does the advent of mobile advertising threaten the profitability of traditional media?

According to Mojica, mobile does not compete with traditional media. Instead, "what mobile offers is convergence and synergy to tie together the disparate strands of a traditional ad and promo campaign," he concluded.

Smart Communications Inc. is the Philippines' leading wireless services provider with 28.3 million subscribers on its GSM network as of end-September 2007. Of its total subscriber base, 19.9 million subscribers are served under the brands Smart Buddy, Smart Gold, and Smart Infinity. Another 8.3 million subscribers are served through its subsidiary, Pilipino Telephone Corp., under the brand Talk 'N Text. Smart has built a reputation for innovation, having introduced world-first wireless data services, including mobile commerce services such as Smart Money, Smart Load, and Smart Padala. Smart also offers Smart Link, a prepaid satellite telephony service, and 3G service called Smart 3G. Another subsidiary, Smart Broadband Inc., offers a wireless broadband service, Smart Bro. Smart is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Philippines' leading telecommunications provider, the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.



Business execs take triathlon challenge

LEISURE IS A SCARCE COMmodity in the lives of successful professionals. Stress simply becomes a way of life when dealing with the pressures of staying ahead of the pack. Considering how hard they work, executives deserve a getaway that would complement the lifestyle they are accustomed to.

Property developer Landco Pacific Corp. created Terrazas de Punta Fuego with the professional's fast-paced lifestyle in mind. A mere two hours away from the chaos of the city, the exclusive seaside community of Terrazas de Punta Fuego is the escape that every urban warrior needs.

Landco is currently infusing the active lifestyle with the leisurely living its properties have become associated with. Consequently, executives, athletes and fitness buffs alike flocked to Terrazas de Punta Fuego last Nov. 10 to participate in its "Conquiste La Tierra y El Mar: The First Punta Fuego de Terrazas Invitational Triathlon."

Organized with the help of the Triathlon Association of the Philippines, the event was attended by bigwigs of the business world, Greg Banzon, general manager of RFM Corp. and Singaporean Daniel Ng of Bounty Fresh Food.

Ng, a Landco property owner, shared, "I am glad that Landco has decided to mount an event like this because I am really into triathlons. Actually, I recently attended a triathlon event in Davao and Cagayan de Oro."

Banzon, a triathlon participant representing the Sunkist Team, said: "I loved swimming in the beach of Terrazas de Punta Fuego. The water is perfect—it's cool—and the shore is smooth."

"Terrazas de Punta Fuego is changing the way we define what living in a resort community is about," says CJ Roque, marketing manager for Terrazas. "That's why we tied up with TRAP or the Triathlon Association of the Philippines to somehow communicate to our residents and the general public that here at Terrazas de Punta Fuego, a dynamic and healthy lifestyle is being adopted and advocated."

The triathlon event showed off what Terrazas has to offer. Participants of the race experienced first-hand the rigorous terrain along The Ridge, the newest development, which boasts a view of the South China Sea.

As they climbed higher, they were rewarded with the panoramic view from The Peak.

Upon crossing the finish line, the racers were rewarded with a taste of the leisurely life that Terrazas de Punta Fuego offers. A seaside buffet was laid out for them and as they dined, the Brass Munkeys entertained everyone.

Terrazas de Punta Fuego has more activities and improvements planned in order to enhance their reputation as a recreational leisure community. For more information, visit their website at www.landcopacific.com.

Landco Pacific Corp. is a multi-product developer of high quality residential resorts, leisure farms, residential developments, shopping centers and CBDs, and memorial parks. The company continues to provide superior value in its developments and is widely recognized as a benchmark for innovative and outstanding lifestyle products that revolutionize the way we live.

New green tea extract hits market

A GREEN TEA EXTRACT WITH varied commercial and health applications has been creating a stir in the local market.

Teavigo is a natural product derived from green tea extract through proprietary technology from Switzerland-based company, DSM Nutritional Products. It contains 95 percent *Epigallocatechin gallate* (EGCG), the most active component of green tea, around three times more than the average green tea extract.

"Teavigo is a highly purified off-white powder, free of caffeine and harmful residues that can be found in some green tea extracts such as herbicides and pesticides," says Corazon Garalde, general manager for DSM Philippines.

"It is tasteless and odorless and can readily be mixed with beverages, cereals, confectionery and dietary supplements, among others," she adds.

Garalde reveals that products with Teavigo can provide as much as three times more the health benefits of green tea without altering their original taste.

"With Teavigo, any food product can reap the benefits of green tea extract without the taste profile of green tea," claims Garalde. "It's practically pure EGCG, whereas other green tea extracts have other components and impurities."

Food and dietary supplement manufacturers who want to add premium to their products can integrate Teavigo into their manufacturing process because it's water soluble.

"The amount of Teavigo on each product depends on the kind of health benefits that the manufacturer wants its product to have," says Garalde.

To get anti-oxidant properties, Garalde says 10 mg to 25 mg per serving or doses is recommended. For fat burning effect, daily intake should be 150 to 300 mg.

"It's not hard to market products with green tea extracts nowadays," says Garalde. "In our recent consumer study, Filipinos are very well aware of the health benefits of green tea. In fact, our respondents want to see green tea extract in juice, yoghurt, soft drinks, supplements and even noodles."

Launched in 2004 worldwide, Teavigo is available in various consumer food and health products in 17 countries.

In the Philippines, Teavigo can be found in Activ EGCG Plus, Fitrium, and Nescafe Fit.

Wide application

"Teavigo is a very versatile health additive and can be added in any consumer food products—fruit juices, yoghurts, sports drink, coffee, tea, carbonated and near-water beverages," says Garalde.

It can also be a standalone health supplement like Taiwan's Yo'come'Purified EGCG Capsules which is positioned for general health and beauty; USA's Teavigo 300, manufactured by GNC and is said to increase energy metabolism; or Japan's Ultimate Combustion Catechins, manufactured by AFC, a fat burner product.

In Japan, where half of the population consumes green tea almost everyday, the most in-demand item is ice cream with green tea extract.

Health gain

DSM Nutritional Products, which was formerly Roche Vitamins, has done extensive scientific research on three key health benefits of EGCG in weight management, oral health, and anti-oxidant properties.

DSM studies show that green tea extracts high in EGCG enhance metabolism, increase fat oxidation and help assist in the reduction of body fat.

In a study conducted by Hase et al. in 2001 for instance, green tea catechins reduced body fat by 8 percent and visceral fat by near 10 percent. Twelve healthy men took part in the study where they were given 483 mg catechins (300mg EGCG, 75 mg caffeine) per day for 12 weeks.

"Teavigo works wonders as a fat burner when taken with regular exercise and a healthy diet. It can be a useful aid in health and weight maintenance," says Garalde.

In oral health, studies show that EGCG plays a pivotal role in the preservation of healthy teeth and gums by inhibiting bacteria from attaching to teeth (plaque), have anti-microbial activity against caries bacteria, prevent collagen destruction, and attack the main constituents of malodor.

"More than anything, Teavigo is a highly effective natural antioxidant and efficient free radical scavenger," stresses Garalde. "With regular intake, Teavigo helps our bodies fight free radicals which are harmful substances that promote aging-related diseases such as cancer and heart problems."

DSM Nutritional Products' HNH manager Corazon Garalde and Food/Pharma Industry manager Daisy Escueta

RP wins international outsourcing award

THE PHILIPPINES WON THE AWARD FOR Best Offshoring Destination of the Year at the fourth annual awards of the National Outsourcing Association (NOA) to recognize and reward innovation and achievement by suppliers, users and integrated teams within the outsourcing industry.

The award ceremonies were held at a glittering black-tie dinner at the Brewery, an elegant and unique award-winning venue in London, attended by about 500 people representing the outsourcing industry.

According to the NOA, "the Philippines is truly developing as a global player in the offshoring marketplace. Its attractiveness as a destination of stems from a combination of important offshoring fundamentals alongside some highly valuable offshoring 'extras.'"

The judges said that "the Philippines shone with reasons to invest in the region. The significant improvements in the infrastructure and attractive trade incentives made it a clear winner. This was a comprehensive submission which provided a huge level of detail on market growth, and was backed up with several strong client testimonials."

This recent win further reinforced the contention of Ambassador Cesar Bautista, private sector cochair of the National Competitiveness Council (NCC), when he noted that "information technology-enabled services had become the fastest growing sector in the Philippine economy, which is expected to provide some 400,000 jobs by the end of 2007 compared to only 8,000 in 2000."

"Our outsourcing services sector is growing at a much faster rate than that of India and the projection that by 2010, the industry would represent a million jobs and $12 billion in revenues seems to be attainable," Bautista said.

The award was received by Vic C. Casim of the Philippine Trade and Investment Center in London and Stephanie Weber of the European IT Service Center Foundation, European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines.

The NOA is UK's only outsourcing trade association. It represents outsourcing end-users, vendors and other companies, which support outsourcing such as legal firms, consultancies and HR.

BLACK Pencil Manila of the Leo Burnett Group was awarded the "Best of the Best" for TV at the recently concluded Araw Awards. BP's executive creative director Lilit Reyes holds the trophy.

Gear up with Bosch Power Tools and Win!
Grand Draw February 14, 2008
Promo runs from Nov. 1, 2007 to Jan. 31, 2008
Join! Bosch
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2 kg Rotary Hammer
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2 ways to win!
1. Get 1 raffle coupon upon purchase of Bosch Power Tools.
Planer
GHO 10-82
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GST 65
Circular Saw
GKS 190
Impact Drill
GSB 13 RE
GSB 16 RE
Cut Off Machine
GCO 2000
Drill
GBM 350 RE
Large Angle Grinder
GWS 20-180
2. Get 1 raffle coupon upon purchase of Bosch Power Tools accessories worth P 2,500.00
Grand Prize 1 winner of Php 100,000
2nd Prize Honda Wave 100 2 winners each for Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao
3rd Prize Mountain Bike 3 winners each for Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao
Consolation Prize IXO 3.6 Screwdriver 6 winners each for Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao
Actual look of prizes may vary from photo.
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Bosch Power Tools are available in Hardware Shops, Hypermarts & other specialty stores nationwide. See Flyers and visit our dealers for more details.
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BUSINESS Friday

Saying it with flowers is big business

RENE Fuentes

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

FILIPINOS SAY EVERYTHING with flowers.

According to Rene E. Fuentes, president of eLBC direct, the e-commerce arm of the LBC group of companies, flowers have remained the single biggest selling item on its website since the company started accepting online orders in 2004.

Fuentes says in an interview that eLBC, through the Flowers Express brand (www.flowersexpress.com.ph) and Express Regalo (www.expressregalo.com), sells an average of 65 flower arrangements every day, each worth an average of P1,450 with some items selling for as low as P475.

And as far as flowers go, roses remain the queen among the varieties, especially the red, red rose.

"We still sell predominantly roses perhaps because they have a high perceived value," he explains.

Although sales of flowers still peak during the Valentine's season (30 percent of the year's business), roses and other flowers are finding their way into other occassions like Christmas.

"Birthdays are a big reason why people send flowers and since someone is having a birthday every day, sales continue throughout the year," he says.

eLBC also gets a lot of orders for flowers to celebrate weddings and graduations.

"Filipinos see flowers as a good way of keeping in touch," he adds.

Flowers account for such a big portion of its sales coming predominantly from Filipinos in the United States that eLBC spun off the Flowers Express site to focus solely on flowers.

Express Regalo, on the other hand, which is its primary online brand, will concentrate on selling other items to cater to the needs of the 800,000 or so customers who use the site to send out gifts to family and friends.

He says online sales account for less than 2 percent of the business of LBC, one of the country's leading courier companies, but there is reason to be bullish because sales have been growing at 60-70 percent a year since 2004.

International rating agencies estimate that sales through the Internet will grow by 58 percent from 2005-2009.

The LBC group saw the coming trend as early as 2002 when eLBC was set up to focus on e-commerce.

Fuentes says the focus at that time was to create another revenue stream from LBC's traditional customer base who use its courier service.

"What we wanted to do then was to try and hook our customers on to other things like our Express Regalo," he says.

Express Regalo started out selling just flowers and wines, but it gradually added more items on its menu as more customers logged on to the site.

And from a site that relied almost exclusively on the customer base that it had in 2004, it has gradually reached out to other groups, including those who have never sent a letter or package through LBC.

"In 2004, 70 percent of our transactions came through our LBC branches. Now, only 30 percent of our sales are coming through the branches in the US," he says.

Like the other e-commerce sites, the value proposition lies in the convenience because people can buy what they want, at any time day or night, without having to go to a mall.

All they need to do is log on to the site, choose what they want and then pay for them using a credit card or any online payment system.

"The delivery system is our advantage because we have been doing it for a long time and we know how to do it," he says.

He explains that this expertise in delivery and logistics helps keep prices of its items affordable because LBC can get to the source of the goods.

"When somebody wants to send *lechon*, for instance, we can get them from either Cebu or Mindanao, wherever is closer to the recipient so they can enjoy the local price," he says.

Lechon, he adds, is one of the more popular items sold through Express Regalo next to flowers.

Other preferred gifts are food packages, cakes, prepaid phone credit cards and electronics, such as the ubiquitous Magic Sing karaoke microphone, and gift certificates.

And if the item they want is not posted on the site, customers can ask Express Regalo to order it especially for them.

Among the special items ordered online are a pedicab, dining sets, home theater systems, jewelry featuring birth stones and specific models of mobile phones.

"That is how we also choose the items we sell online. If an item gets requested several times, we add it on to our list of featured items," he says.

He says the bulk of the orders still come from the United States, mainly from the West Coast, although Filipinos from the Middle East are slowly getting into the picture.

Very few Filipinos living in the Philippines log on to the site, he says, because prices are dollar based and Filipinos here would much prefer to do their shopping in a mall or department store.

eLBC, however, is not leaving Filipinos in the country behind and is banking on two categories—M Express and Digiprint to reel them in.

M Express' promise is to sell Filipinos here leading magazine titles at newsstand prices but delivered to the homes or offices.

He says M Express is also being developed to cater to the overseas Filipino workers who want local content—such as movies, music and local magazines—to be sent to them abroad.

eLBC is also bullish on the prospects of Digiprint, which is the company's equivalent to a photo developing kiosk.

All the customer needs to do is upload their photos to the site, choose which ones to be developed and these will then be delivered to them via LBC, of course.

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LIFESTYLE

Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso**

sms feedback: inquirer life name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 386 (Smart) **or email us at** lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

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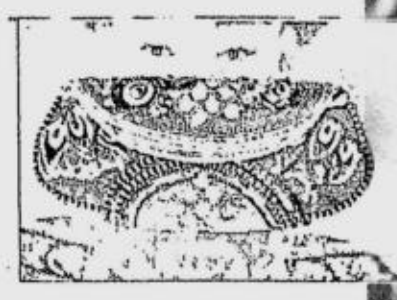
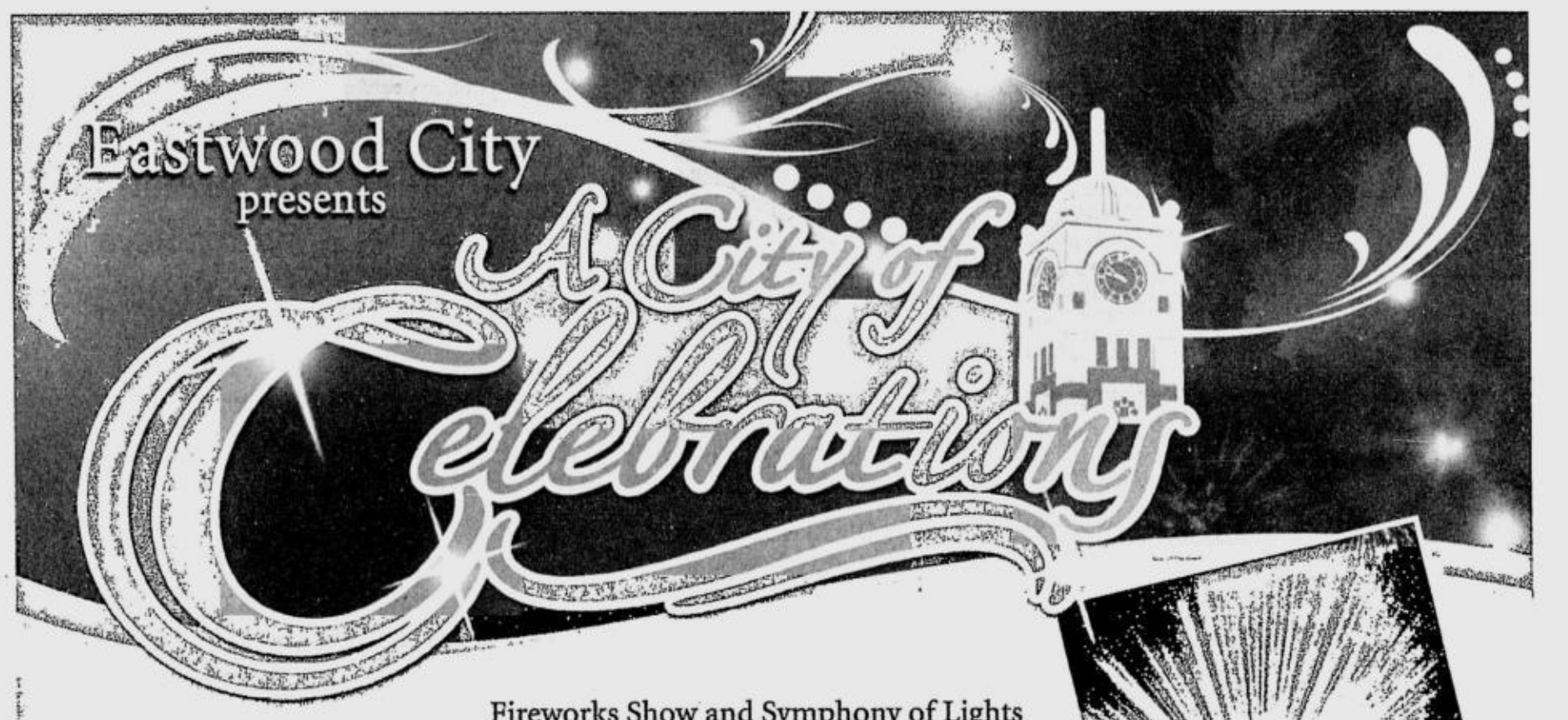


■ **Chic clutches** from Bea Valdes /G1

■ **One more chance** for the Pinoy fashion designer /H1



■ **Brush up on 2008** hair trends /J1

Fireworks Show and Symphony of Lights

Watch a breathtaking display of colors and lights illuminating the Eastwood cityscape.

Eastwood Central Plaza / Dec. 14 - 31, Fridays and Saturdays, 10 PM

Fountain of Light

Enjoy a magical, one-of-a kind water, light and music spectacle.

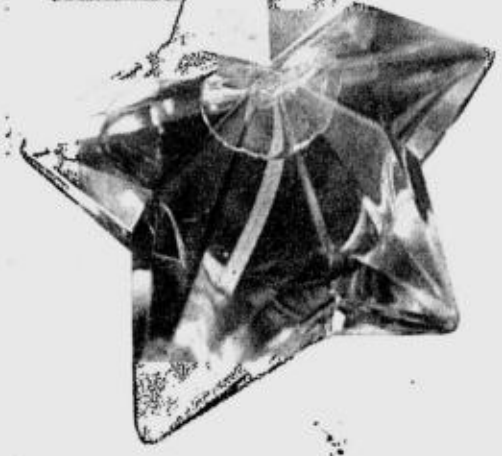
Fuente Circle / Daily from Dec. 14 - 31, 7 PM, 8 PM, 9 PM and 10 PM

Christmas Wishing Tree

Help make this Christmas truly merry for the children of C.R.I.B.S. Philippines, Inc. (Create Responsive Infants By Sharing). With every P20 you donate, you can hang your Christmas wish envelope on Eastwood's Wishing Tree.

Eastwood City Walk 1 / Dec. 14 - Dec. 31, 3 PM to 12 MN

■ **Scents** for giving /K1



Let It Snow, Let It Snow, Let It Snow!

Experience White Christmas as snow blankets Eastwood City at night.

Eastwood City Walk 2 / Dec. 14 - Dec. 23, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, 6 PM - 7 PM ; 8 PM - 9 PM

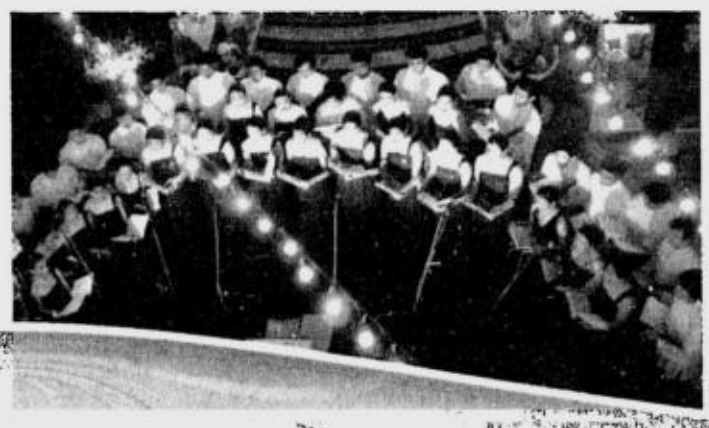
Come Visit the Christmas Village

Eastwood City Walk 2 / Dec. 14 - Dec. 31, 12 NN

Here comes Santa Claus,
here comes Santa Claus!
Take a click! A pose to keep!

Meet and Greet Santa and His Elves

Eastwood City Walk 2 / Dec. 14 - Dec. 23, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, 6 PM - 7 PM

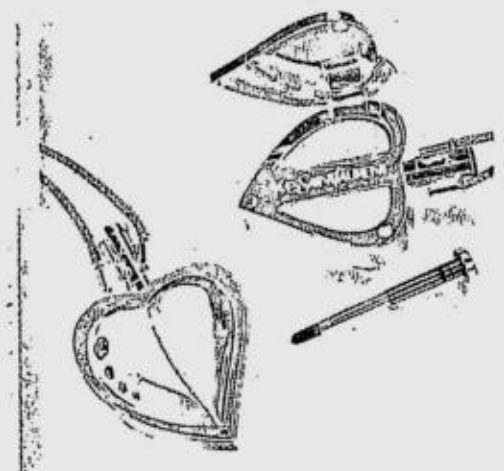


Christmas Chorale

Angelic voices resonate to delight one and all at Eastwood City!

Vespers: Jay Gomez & Toto Sorioso - Dec. 14
Oluvus - Dec. 15
Sandiwa Chorale - Dec. 16
CCP Glee Club - Dec. 21 & 22
Sandiwa Chorale - Dec. 23

Eastwood City Walk 2 / Dec. 14 - Dec. 23, 7 PM - 8 PM



■ **Keep your weight** down despite all those Christmas parties /K4

Explore GUAM U.S.A.

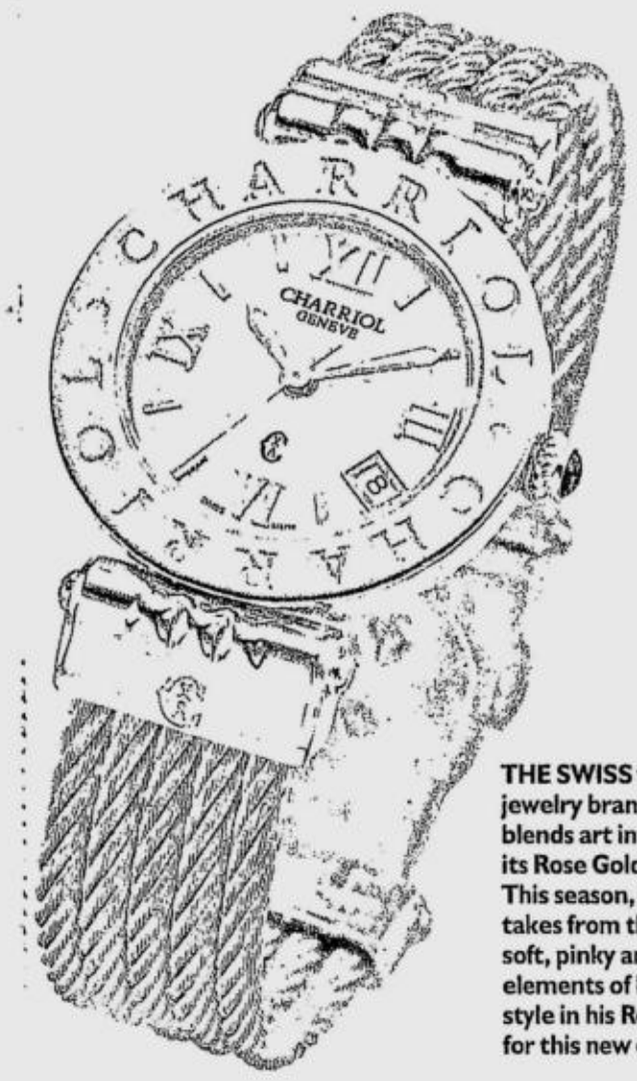
Shop and dine at Eastwood City or Paseo Center this December and get a chance to win one of the four travel packages to GUAM, U.S.A. for two.
See posters and flyers for details.
Per DTI NCR Permit no. 4395 Series of 2007

Seven Days of Laughter at Eastwood City

Eastwood City, E. Rodriguez, Jr. Ave. (C-5), Bagumbayan, Quezon City • Tel. 687-6770 to 74 • 0917-8-EWCITY

Most wanted

FOUR sapphire glass apertures on the sides of the case, as well as the more traditional sapphire glass case back, fill the heart of Omega De Ville Hour Vision. An entire sapphire case is set into the stainless steel.



THE SWISS watch and jewelry brand Charriol blends art into life with its Rose Gold collection. This season, Charriol takes from the vivid but soft, pinky and young elements of Picasso's style in his Rose Period for this new collection.

BULGARI's new B.zero1 watch has two heart motifs in steel and pink gold with diamond pave. Its dial has colored mother-of-pearl and 12-diamond indexes; its bracelet is provided with a déployante buckle.

For the ultimate stocking-stuffer, nothing beats an elegant watch, and if it is Swiss-made, diamond encrusted, strapped in precious gold or elegant leather and comes with a luxury label's guarantee, it is all the gift you need.

Whimsical for Christmas

A SELECTION OF TRUE GEMS awaits women, or the men who love them, at Bulgari this Christmas. With these classic, contemporary and fun designs, there's a little bit of everything to match every sophisticated personality. Rings, necklaces, pendants, bracelets and earrings come in white gold, yellow gold and rose gold interpretations with each piece created to make a bold yet elegant statement.

The Cicladi collection is a definition of playful jewelry, with overlapping disks that turn, twist and spin. Inspired by the art deco era, these pieces are made in matte or shiny yellow gold or white gold.

The Bzero1 collection is a modern take on a Bulgari classic. In yellow gold and white gold variations with some designs enriched with pavé diamonds.

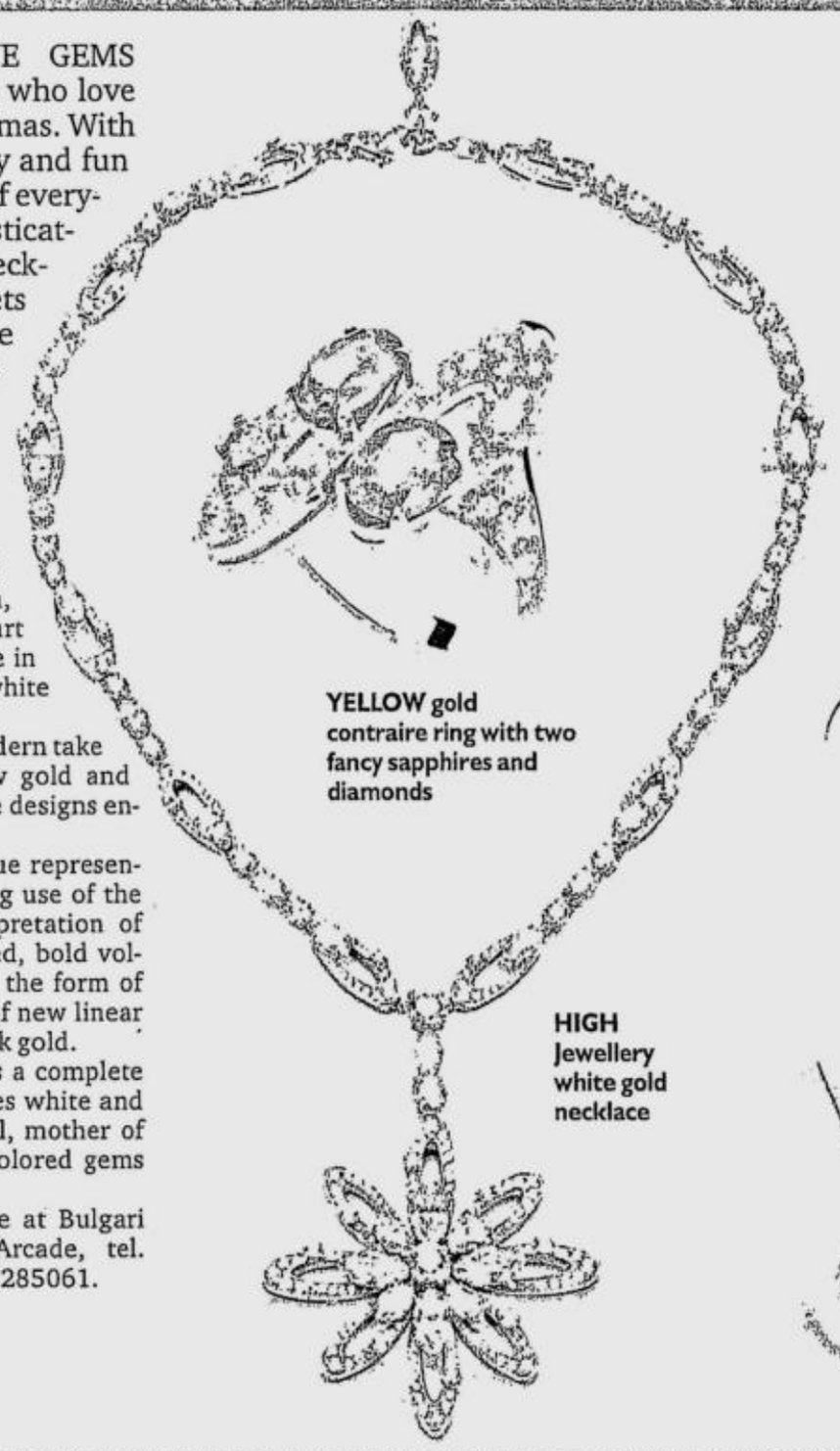
Cabochon rings offer a unique representation of minimalism by making use of the ellipse—a contemporary interpretation of the cabochon cut stone. Gauged, bold volumes and dimensions describe the form of the pieces, with the evolution of new linear elements in yellow, white or pink gold.

The Elisia collection features a complete selection of jewelry that marries white and yellow gold with enamel, coral, mother of pearl, and a great variety of colored gems and diamonds.

The collections are available at Bulgari Boutiques: 6750 Shopping Arcade, tel. 8933189 and Greenbelt 4, tel. 7285061.

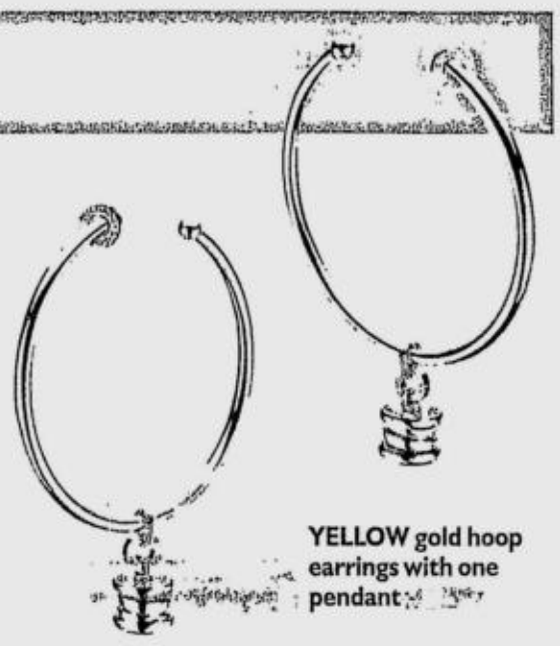
HIGH Jewellery yellow gold necklace

CABOCHON ring in 18k pink gold



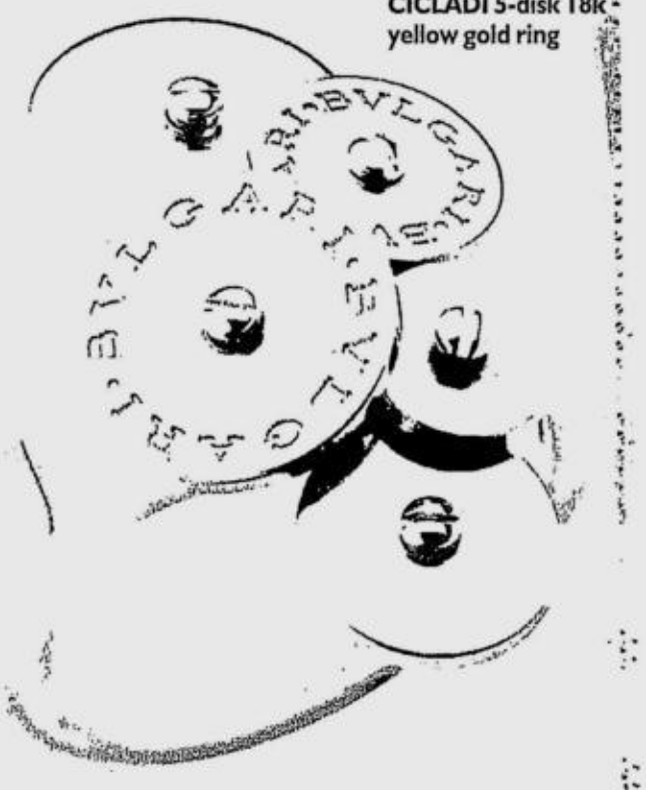
YELLOW gold contraire ring with two fancy sapphires and diamonds

HIGH Jewellery white gold necklace

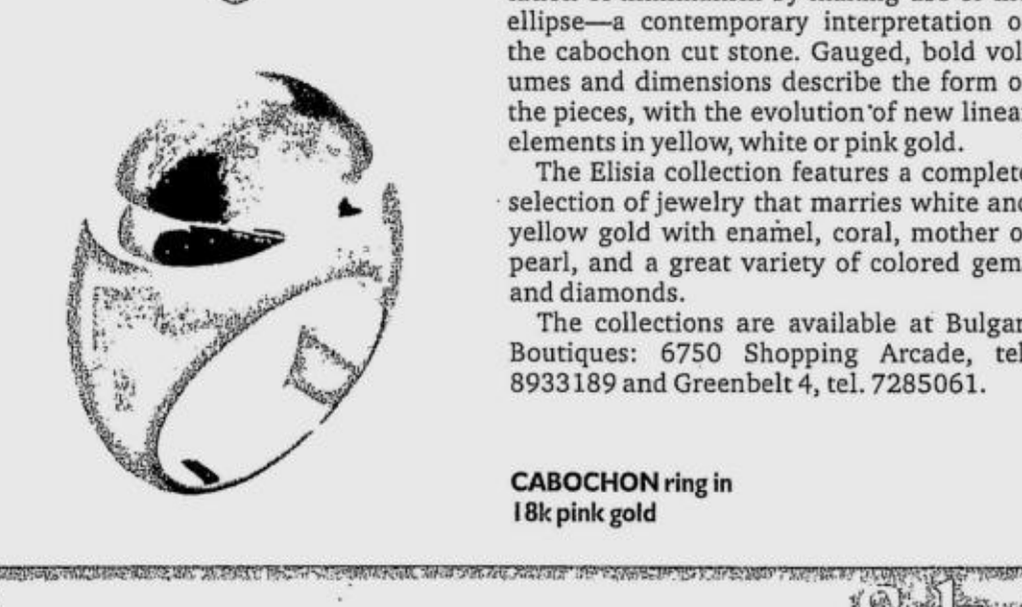


YELLOW gold hoop earrings with one pendant

CICLADI 5-disk 18k yellow gold ring



Silver trinkets



THE ROSE quartz cabochon ring is part of the Candy Collection.

CHRISTMAS IS THE SEASON TO accessorize—from decking halls with holly boughs to putting on sparkly silver trinkets! Michelis Gifts and Jewellery celebrates this merry period with a holiday selection for the naughty and nice.

The earrings and pendant from the Poinsettia Collection bring instant yuletide cheer to any outfit. Flowers with white topazes adorn a sterling silver chain; the pieces are accented with red cold enamel to represent the season's most famous flora. Or you can give a gift of luck by presenting a loved one with a pendant called Touch Wood. Opting for this square wood knot is like spreading auspicious wishes.

It's White Christmas anywhere you go when you wear the snowflakes collection of Michelis. The young at heart will be charmed by the sterling silver earrings and bracelet designed like snowflakes and accented with blue topaz. The Candy Collection, yummy-looking rose quartz is the centerpiece of a ring, and may be matched with blue quartz, rose quartz, and lemon quartz that are strung together in a necklace. And finally, there's the Holly Pin, painted with green cold enamel and accented with fresh water pearls—a brooch that gives one's outfit a quick festive touch.

Whatever the season, sterling silver jewelry looks good on Filipinos because it appears softer and cooler on the skin. More affordable than gold, sterling silver is for someone who can effortlessly shift from quirky to classic, has an eye for good things, and believes in getting value for money.

Each sterling silver piece possesses the level of purity required by the international market.

All Michelis pieces are designed and handcrafted by Filipinos according to European standards.

Customers can view the Christmas collection of Michelis at the following branches: Greenbelt 1, Mandarin Oriental Manila, Shoppesville, Greenhills, The Podium, Rustan's ATC, Rustan's Ermita and Rustan's Tower.

Call 7243303, 8942413 or 7516352.

THIS SQUARE wood knot pendant on brown neoprene cord is a gift of luck.

DREAM of a white Christmas with the Snowflakes collection.

Time to sparkle and shine

DURING THE BASELWORLD 2007 WATCH and jewelry trade show held in Basel, Switzerland, Timex premiered the Timex Diamond Collection, a set of new diamond timepieces.

Each of the Timex Diamond Collection watches is supported by a certificate of authenticity attesting to the grades of color and clarity of each diamond set within the timepiece. During the process of selection and grading, samples from each batch of jewels are checked up to three times to guarantee that they meet established standards. The batches that pass this screening are then 100-percent examined so as to ensure the quality of every diamond.

The certificate of authenticity also confirms that every diamond on the Timex Diamond Collection watches adheres to the Kimberley Process, the certification method mandated by the United Nations to stop the trafficking of conflict diamonds, or diamonds used to finance warfare. All diamonds used in the collection come from non-conflict countries participating in the Kimberley Process.

There are four striking watch designs in the Timex Diamond Collection, all of which beautifully highlight the diamonds. The designs range from a six-diamond watch to a 24-diamond watch, and each of these combines meticulous standards of material quality, attention to detail, and sophisticated style.

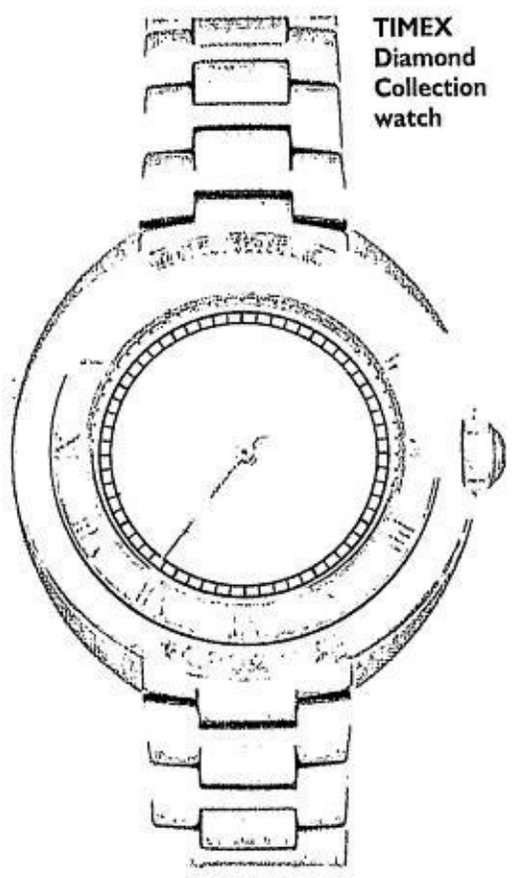
The collection's flagship model draws inspiration from Timex's rich design history, creating a classy dress watch inspired by the vintage 1960s era. The joaillerie-influenced timepiece glitters with a seductive blend of grace and fluidity, with a case adorned with 16 hand-selected diamonds that cluster at the 12 and 6 o'clock positions.

The collection delivers maximum elegance by using fine details and touches of luxury. With a color pallet of subtle neutrals, the range uses the power of light and reflection to their maximum potential.

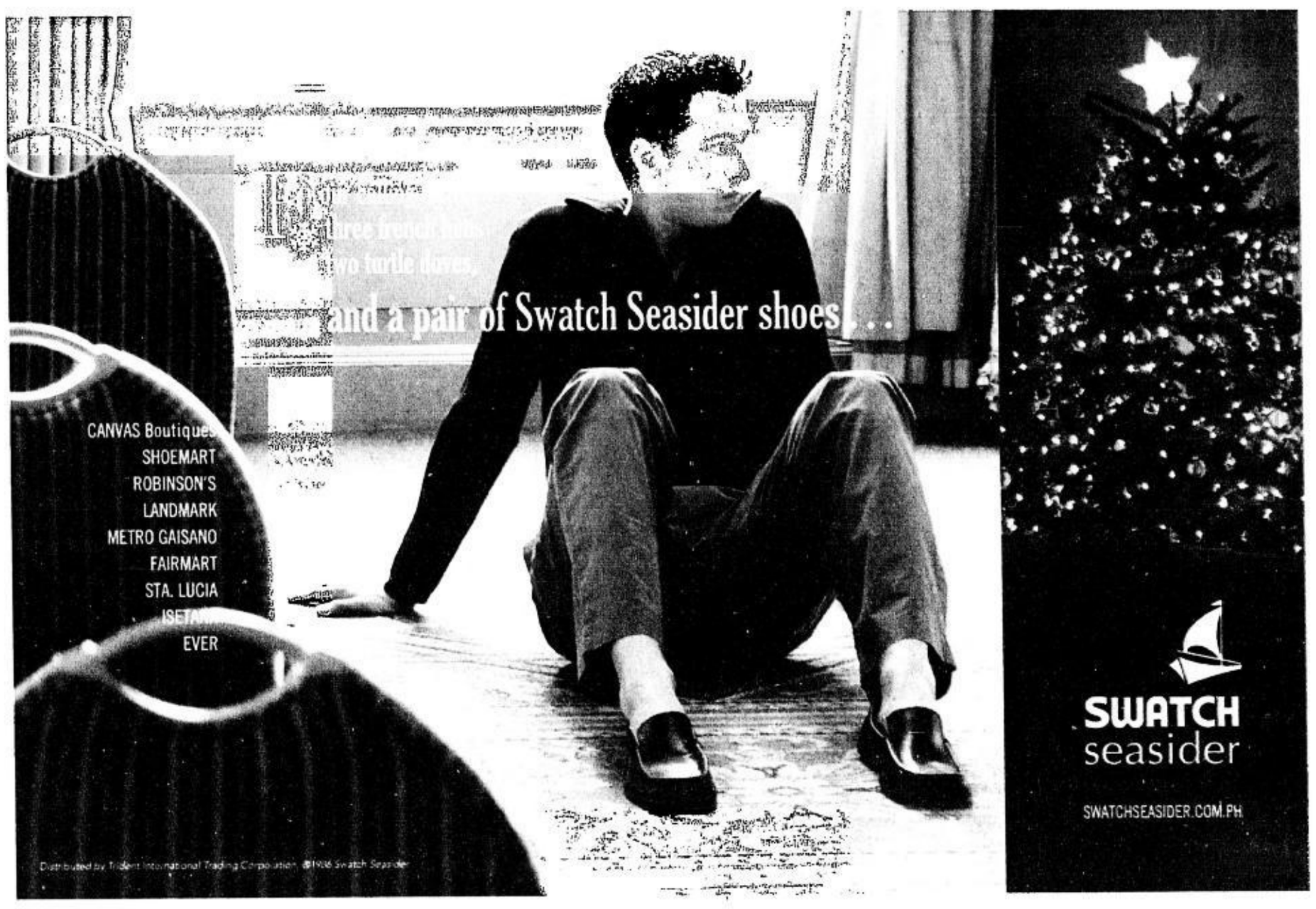
On many dials, mother-of-pearl and sunray brushing are also used. And to carry on the pearlescent scheme, even the leather straps are finished with subtle metallic colors, enhancing the watches' glow. The bracelets and cases' polished steel and gold-plating provide the perfect backdrops to make the diamonds shine all the more.

In the Philippines, Timex is distributed by Newtrends International Corporation and is sold in more than 300 watch shops nationwide including Timex stores and kiosks.

SUPERSTAR timepiece. Angel Locsin and her Timex watch



TIMEX Diamond Collection watch



COMPLETE YOUR CHRISTMAS SHOPPING IN STYLE AT THE PODIUM

One of the most enjoyable yet most difficult things to do during the holidays is shopping for Christmas presents. Finding just the right gift for your loved ones is always difficult. But if you manage to do so, it's always worth the trouble, seeing the smile brighten your recipient's face.

Complete your Christmas shopping list in style at The Podium during the **Pre-Christmas sale on December 14-16.** Enjoy great deals and discounts of up to 70% off on the most stylish fashions and latest toys from your favorite stores. For your greater shopping pleasure, store hours are also extended, so you can shop from 10am to 11pm on Dec. 14 and 16 and from 10am to 12mn on the 15th. You don't even have to worry about parking because for just P80, you can make use of the Valet Parking service.

If you'd like to take a break from your shopping, drop by The Lounge and let the Mandaluyong Children's Choir serenade you with the most heartwarming Christmas carols. For the young and the young at heart, there's also the Trumpets Fairytale Ville Musicale.

So, for truly stylish shopping that covers everything from product selection, comfort and entertainment, The Podium is definitely the place to go.

THE LOUNGE at THE PODIUM

CHRISTMAS EVENTS

A Yuletide Carol Extravaganza

Hear the sounds of Christmas as the country's finest chorales and orchestras serenade you with heartwarming Christmas favorites.

The Mandaluyong Children's Choir
Dec. 15, 5pm

Ryan Cayabyab's Glee Girls Group Led by Choir Master Emi Cayabyab
Dec. 18, 7pm

UP Manila Chorale
Dec. 20, 5pm

Xavier Glee Club
Dec. 21, 3pm

DLSU Pops Orchestra
Dec. 22, 5pm

Las Pinas Boys Choir
Dec. 23, 5pm

UP Singing Ambassadors
Dec. 24, 5pm

Grupo Querdas Strings
Dec. 26, 5pm

Christmas Musical Shows

Bask in the spirit of Christmas as you watch these specially selected Christmas shows.

Trumpets Christmas Fairytale Ville Musical
Dec. 16, 5pm

Ateneo Highschool Symphonic Ensemble
Dec. 19, 6pm

Angelos: The Four Tenors
Dec. 25, 6pm

December Mall Hours

Dec. 1 - 30*
10am - 10pm

*Except on :
Dec. 24 & 31(Mon)
9am - 7pm

Jan. 1, 2008
12nn - 10pm

3 Days of Indulgence!

CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAYS IN STYLE. ENJOY UP TO 70% OFF

DEC. 14 • 16, 10am-11pm
DEC. 15, 10am-12midnight

THE PODIUM

18 ADB Avenue, Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. A3-0990 Series of 2007

FASHION

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

LIFESTYLE

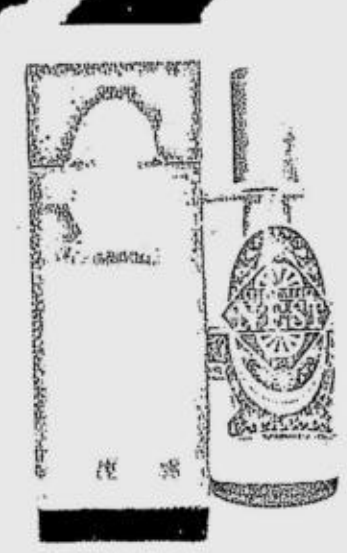
Contributing Editors
Apples Aberin-Sadhwani
and Jenni Epperson

The Inquirer Fashion gift guide

Present perfect

Text by Nina Estacio
Contributor
Photos by Chuck Reyes

TO BREAK OFF THE MONOTONY THAT comes with Christmas gift-giving (after all, you have to do it year in and year out), try to give something more exciting this time. And while there's truth to the saying that it's the thought that counts, there are some things around the corner worth your thought and worth your peso. Therefore, here are thoughtful—and more exciting—Christmas gift ideas.



NEST Scent from Rustan's, P995

NEST Candle from Rustan's, P995

One

BPI EXPRESS CREDIT

Buy

Take

FREE!

Get two (2) 500ml bottles of One White Tea FREE!

Shop and spend a total of P500 in participating supermarkets using your BPI Express Credit card

Promo period from December 2009 to January 31, 2010

Robinsons supermarket
Landmark
The Landmark
Southstar
ultra mega
BPI

To redeem, cardholder must present his BPI Express Credit card and original charge slip (minimum of P500)

See flyer for details. Promo valid from December 2009 to January 31, 2010

For Mom

From page D0

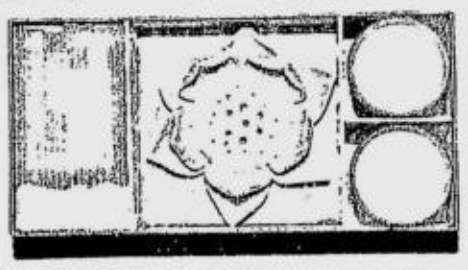
SEA Folly umbrella from Rustan's, P2,450

GOURMET Dipping set from T Salon, Glorietta, P2,195

SEA Folly scarf from Rustan's, P2,150

BOUDOIR Mom2bee charm photo bracelet from Rustan's, P1,750

HOT Pink silk robe, P1,195



VINTAGE Flower home fragrance from Rustan's, P1,250

BOUDOIR pillbox from Rustan's, P995

For Dad

A whole year of late-night meetings and early-morning appointments has stressed out dad. Don't you think he deserves a back rub? Or practical yet up-to-the-minute finds?

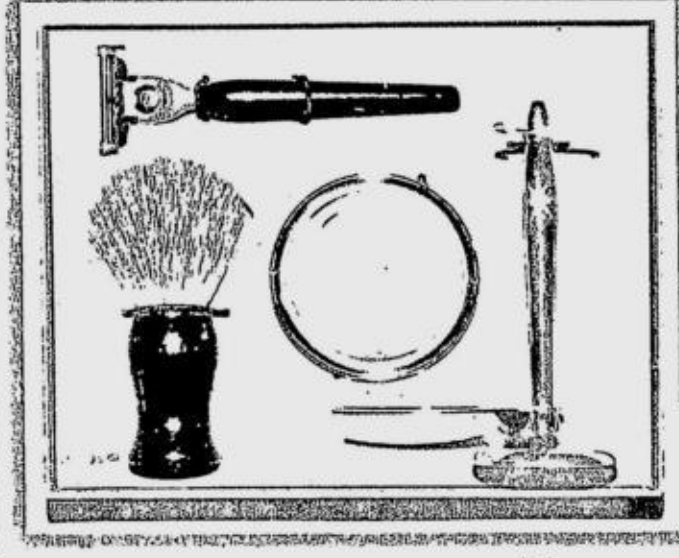
Dad's Chair Only.

EASY chair pillow and remote holder from Rustan's, P995

SALT black jacket from Rustan's, P2,550

FLASH disk containers from Rustan's, P795

BRAUN Buffel Flask Set from Rustan's, P8,599.75



ACCA Kappa shaving kit, P7,950

For fashional friends

Thrill your chic & friends with stylish useful stocking stuff

JUICY Couture laptop case fro Rustan's, P6,250

JUICY Couture notebooks from

YUBZ TALK from Rustan's, P2

For a Sporty sis

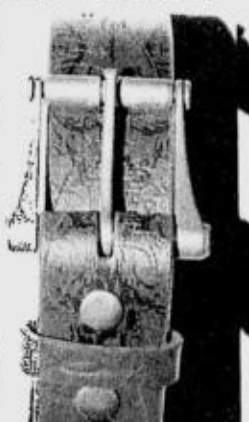
For your sporty sis or friend, there's nothing better than giving her something that will satisfy her athletic needs.

BILLABONG Bikini, P3,000

RUBBER Duck Espadrilles from Rustan's, P1,450

NIKE Tumbler, P845

NIKE Imara Keeva Watch from L Time Studio



OAKLEY Women's belt, P2,195

ZOOYORK Hoodie from Rustan's, P3,750

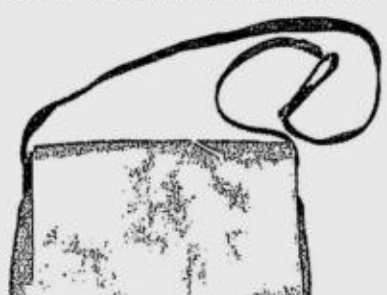
ADIDAS Black handbag, P2,595

For a techie boyfriend

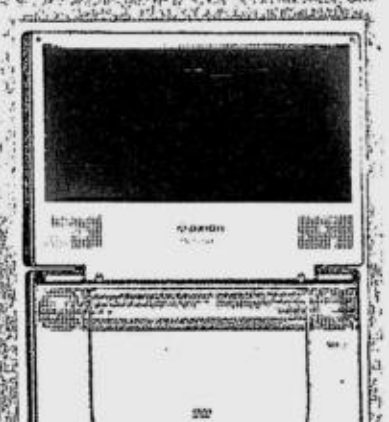
Hi-tech gadgets will surely gladden your brother or boyfriend.

MOBILE Wonders iTalk for Skype from Rustan's, P395

DKNY Watch from L Time Studio



SALT messenger/laptop bag from Rustan's



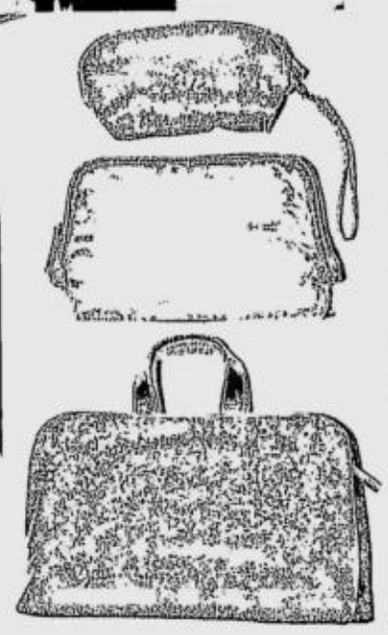
AXION Portable DVD player from Rustan's, P7,750

THOMPSON London Bracelet/Choker from Rustan's, P3,950

AUDIO Wireless FM Transmitter from Rustan's, P1,350

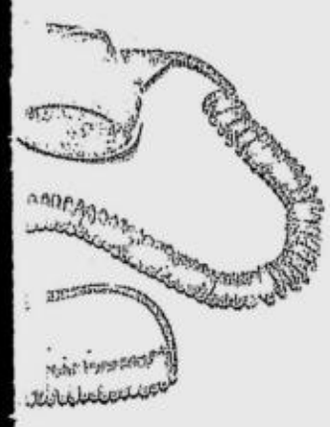
Melissa Rubber heels from

RED RayBan Wayfarers, P5,990



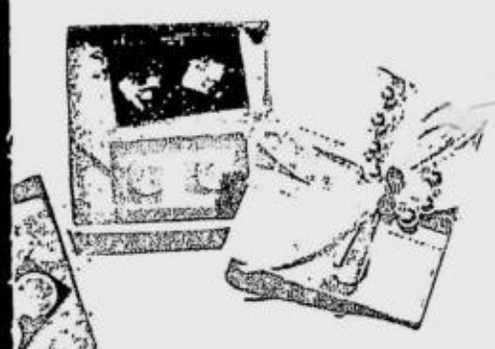
LIZ Claiborne traveling kit from Rustan's, P1,550

Rustan's, P3,450



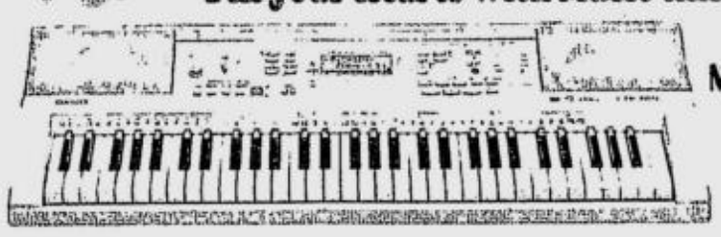
ZINCLINC heart necklaces from Rustan's, P795

Rustan's, P3,895



GEM earrings from Pilar, P250

Fill your Hearts with Music this Holiday Season with Casio Keyboards



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From the first week of December, our calendar starts to be booked with one Christmas party after the other. And usually this means sharing deliciously rich feasts with friends and family. It's hard to stay healthy when there's just so much fabulous food tempting you. At least make sure you drink something that's good for you!

Make C2 Green Tea your Christmas drink. Delicately brewed from natural green tea leaves and bottled on the same day, C2 has the wonderful flavor of real green tea with all its healthy goodness. Green tea helps reduce the risk of heart problems and lowers high blood pressure. Instead of absorbing the cholesterol, green tea prompts the body to increase the amount of fat it releases. In a way, it helps undo all the effects of that holiday ham and other sinful dishes you're sure to be indulging in!

Be a good host and serve C2 Green Tea to your guests too! C2 has a great variety of flavors that caters to different tastes: green tea plain, lemon, apple, peach, strawberry, forest fruits, kiwi and lychee. You can offer individual servings with the 350 mL and 500 mL bottles. For the low-calorie and sugar-free Christmas fix, try the C2 Lite variants of apple, lemon and green tea plain. For the numerous gatherings and parties, C2 Liter is perfect for sharing!

In the true spirit of Christmas, part of every purchase of C2 bought from December 8 to 22 in Robinson's Cebu, Galleria and Ermita, Market! Market!, Tiendesitas, Alabang Town Center, Trinoma and Foodparks (Enterprise, LKG Tower and GT Tower) will be donated to World Vision, a humanitarian organization working to make the world a better place for underprivileged children.

Share something really good this season. Share C2 Green Tea.

World Vision 50 years in the Philippines 1957-2007
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"Zunic, by far, has the most effective and relaxing slimming treatments (with immediate and lasting results) I've ever experienced!"

– Authentic customer statement, 22 March 2007
(not a paid endorsement)

It's not easy for hearty eaters to diet. Everyone knows how agonizing it is to deprive yourself of food! It is no less difficult when you're overweight; all that extra weight dangerously accelerates your heart rate, which may put you at risk from heart failure.

Fortunately, the latest advances in medical technology make it possible to lose weight and actually shape your body without exercise, dieting, pills, injections, or painful surgery.

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Since no two people are alike, no two Zunic programs are exactly the same. Each program is individually-tailored to meet your time constraints, and to achieve your personal objectives.

That's why more and more busy people come to Zunic. We aim to deliver immediate shaping and toning results (often times in as little as 45 minutes), with as little fuss as possible.

Visit us today to discover what Zunic can do for you! We're open daily (Monday to Sunday) from 8am to 8pm. Consultations are free, and are held in strict confidence.

Gentlemen appreciate Zunic's results-oriented approach to body sculpting too!

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MEN'S brown leather monk strap loafer

Step out in style

TO THE UNTRAINED EYE, men's shoes all look the same, which often leads to men buying the same pair over and over again.

American premier luxury brand Cole Haan gives tips on choosing the right men's shoes for certain occasions.

Pair them right. For jeans, chinos or khakis, there are a variety of casual shoes that range from rugged to refined, such as loafers, oxfords and other men's shoes that work well with casual pants. As these shoes get the most wear, comfort is essential. Also, choose something you like well enough that you can wear it often, in a style that suits your personality and taste.

For times when a suit is too much, but you want to appear as though you've made an effort to look nice, wear casual shoes. Dressy casual shoes, such as tassled loafers, will do the trick.

For dressy occasions, lace up or slip-on shoes can work well. Choose one that is the same color or darker than your pants, and if wearing a belt, make sure it matches your shoes.

Let the style be your guide. It's easy to pick the right shoe for the look you want if you pay attention to detail. Woven patterns or heavy stitching indicate a rugged shoe, while tassels, buckles and hardware ornamentation tend to be more refined. Shinier materials usually indicate a dressier shoe, as do less bulky heels and soles.

Check the weather. Weather and climate are important factors for selecting the shoe to wear. For wet weather and colder climates, men might opt for a stylish boot, and when the temperature is higher, a chic sandal can fill this role.

Colors matter. Match shoes with pants, and match belts with shoes. Black shoes work well with navy, gray or black pants. Brown shoes are best suited to tan, brown, beige, greens, other darker earth tones. Burgundy shoes work well with khaki, lighter browns, blue and gray. Tan shoes look great with lighter earth tones, blue, beige, lighter tan or white.

Whether you're looking for a pair of everyday shoes, dressy casual shoes, or dress shoes, Cole Haan's Fall 2007 collection has the pair for you. With slip-ons, boots, oxfords and penny loafers that range from everyday to dress shoes, in a variety of essential shades, the latest offerings from Cole Haan are fully padded and leather lined, in exquisite materials such as calfskin, crocodile embossed leather, rich vachetta and smooth leather.

Cole Haan boutiques are located at Rockwell Power Plant Mall, Glorietta 4 and Shangri-La Mall.

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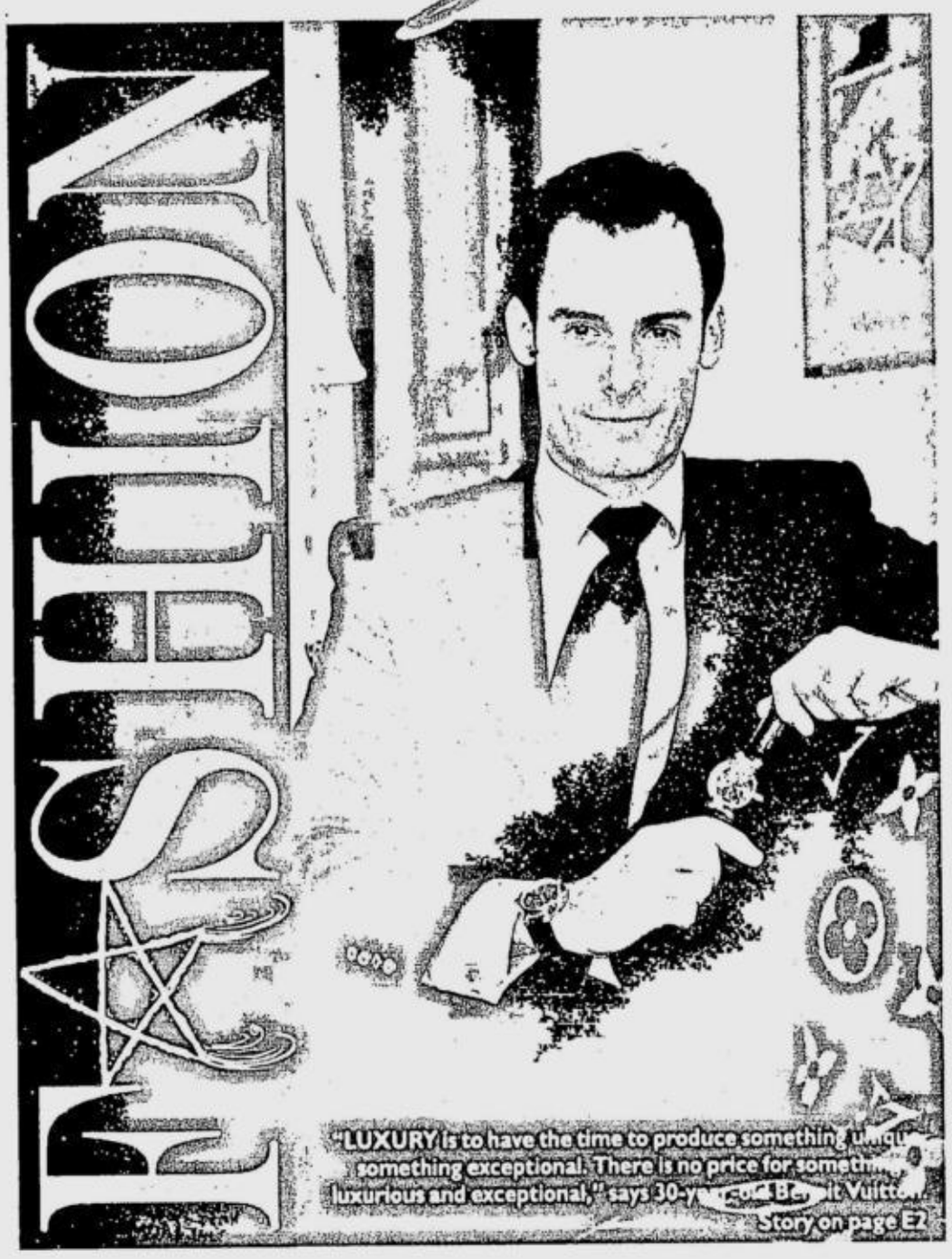
LIFESTYLE



"LUXURY is to have the time to produce something unique, something exceptional. There is no price for something luxurious and exceptional," says 30-year-old Bryan Nit Vuitton.

Story on page E2

Don't let yourself go bald... even the ladies agree.

There's a lot you miss if you're bald—sharing intimate moments when your partner runs her hands through your hair...being confident to strike a conversation with women without feeling self-conscious about your receding hairline...pulling a suave move to give ladies a lasting impression..

Take Actor/Businessman Joey Marquez's advice, "Don't let yourself go bald." Like most men, Joey equates losing hair with losing charisma, potency and vigor. "You tend to look older with less hair. And nobody wants to look old. I'd rather be seen as classic, not old," added Joey.

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It's gotta be Shakey's

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BENOIT Vuitton explains why the Tambour Monogram Tourbillon watch is exceptional and well worth its sky-high price and 10-12 months' waiting time.

Suave scion, timeless timepiece

Photos by Daniel Tan

Benoit Vuitton, a sixth-generation member of the great fashion house, waxes ecstatic over the new LV Tourbillon watch

HE ACTUALLY NEEDS NO introduction. His last name speaks for itself and carries with it a heritage of more than 150 years.

Benoit Vuitton, a sixth-generation Vuitton and great-great-great grandson of the Louis Vuitton himself, is, not surprisingly, passionate about LV the brand and the highly personalized and exclusive Tambour Monogram Tourbillon watch that he personally handles and offers to the most discriminating clientele.

APPLES' PICKINGS

Apples Aberin-Sadhwani

We had the chance to chat with the 30-year-old looker (he's at least 6' tall, lean, clean-cut and well-dressed) about the brand's heritage, this most luxurious offering and his role in the company. Read on and find out what this Vuitton's thoughts are on the company's growth and on LV's golden child, designer Marc Jacobs, among many other things.

What was the vision of Louis Vuitton when your great-great-great grandfather first founded the brand?

First, you have to know that I'm part of the watch department taking care of watches, and the watches I'm in charge of are special-order and custom-made watches. This watch is a custom-made watch because it's part of the tradition of Louis Vuitton. When Louis Vuitton himself created the brand 153 years ago, he was wrapping the clothes and the dresses of the ladies at the time when they were traveling. The tradition of Louis Vuitton and the Louis Vuitton company has always been about wrapping and taking care of the dresses and things of people. Afterward, it did well in bags and all these things that are famous. So now, we have watches because it is part of travel and the accessories of travel.

What do you mean exactly by wrapping? How did he go about doing that?

At the time, it was pieces of paper used to wrap and protect beautiful dresses. That's why we arrived to a kind of trunk that is made of a certain coated material to protect the dresses from rain and humidity. Travel at that time was a long journey, so travelers had to feel confident their things were protected wherever they were in the world.

So he would literally pack for them?

We are called trunk-makers, wrappers, packers. And as travel evolved, we evolved from trunks to suitcases and, after that, to bags and station bags that matched.

How has the company evolved under the leadership of Bernard Arnault and Yves Carcelle?

Carcelle became the president in 1992 and, together with Arnault, they decided to make it a more global brand, respecting the tradition, respecting the spirit, which is travel. Why ready-to-wear? Ready-to-wear goes into the trunks and suitcases. Why watches? Because it's part of travel. Shoes are part of travel, too.

Are you actively involved in the day-to-day operations and decision-making process involving the brand, not just watches?

I'm really part of the watch department and I'm a product manager. But in my years in the company (he started working for LV in 1999), I did an internship. I spent a few weeks in Asnieres, which is our workshop—the first historical workshop—to know how to make trunks, and to put nails in the trunks. I've been in stores in London and Tokyo. My first job was really that. I started in stores.

What did you take up in school? Was it something geared toward marketing?

I did a BB in marketing and management and I started an MBA that I didn't finish. I was supposed to finish my MBA in the US but I worked in the stores.

Anything you'd like to share with us about LV's directions? Maybe a new endorser? A new collaboration with an artist or another building in another part of the world?

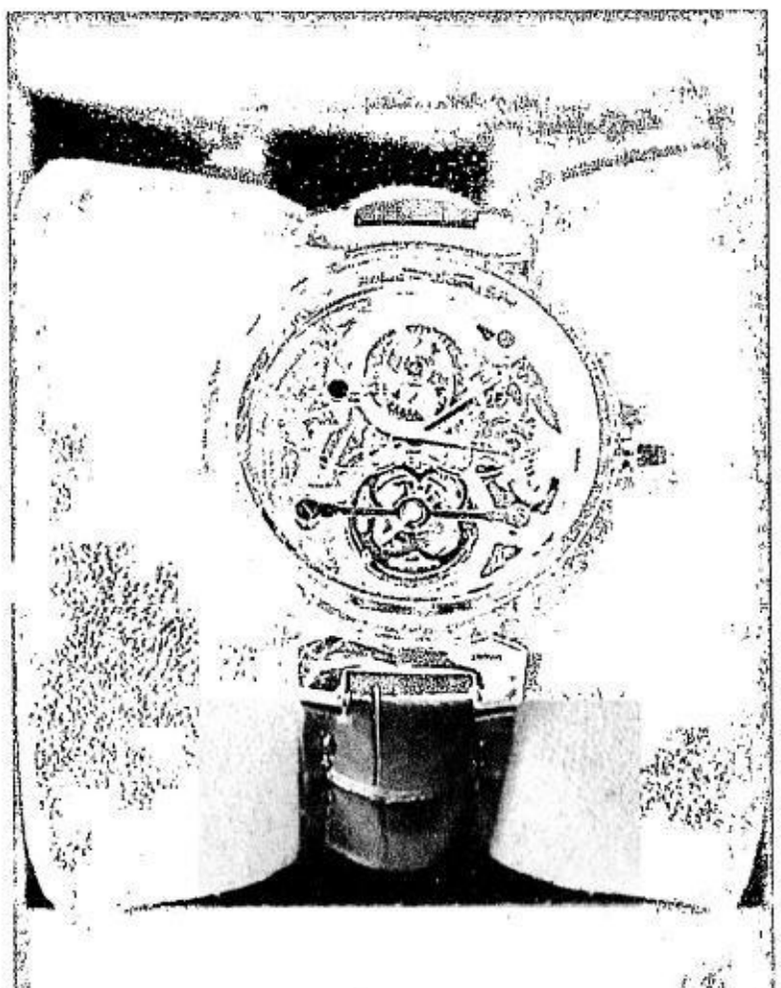
As far as I'm concerned, in the watch collection, there is the Tambour, which is the round collection. It comes three years after we launched the square Speedy collection. And for more than a year now, Marc Jacobs has been really working on a type of watch that will be previewed in March. So it will be the Marc Jacobs watch for Louis Vuitton.

What do you think of Marc Jacobs? How has he helped Louis Vuitton?

That's a great designer. He was someone from the US, someone from outside the leather goods spirit. Before he launched his first collection, he spent one year in Louis Vuitton getting inspiration. His first step was to look, to have an idea of the brand and to make it move a little bit.

Yves Carcelle used to say that he woke up the Sleeping Beauty. That's really what we can say about him.

Louis Vuitton was a great brand but it was old and with a lot of tradition. And Marc Jacobs came and, while keeping this tradition, he also made it new. And from that also, he had the idea to call regularly some artists like Stephen Sprouse, Murakami, people like that to think and to work on what is Louis Vuitton and to make it glow with different eyes.



THE LOUIS Vuitton Tambour Monogram Tourbillon watch can be custom-made to display one's initials, and can be made in yellow, white, pink gold or platinum with stingray or alligator straps, and diamonds or any precious stone of choice.

PERSONALIZED Tambour Monogram Tourbillon comes in its own mini trunk that can be made of any LV leather of choice—the LV Monogram, the Damier or perhaps Epi leather, to name a few. The trunk also includes a key holder, travel kit and certificate, plus a small patch for any inscriptions.

How would you define luxury?

I'll show you the watch, which is really luxury. This watch is made to order. The customer has a choice between white, yellow or pink gold and platinum. There's one thing in the movement (the LV monogram) that can be changed into your initials. There's an exchange between the client and us. We are making designs. We have also the opportunity to put diamonds and to really personalize it. And this whole process takes between 10-12 months.

I think this is luxury. Luxury is to have the time to produce something unique, something exceptional. There is no price for something luxurious and exceptional.

Why did Louis Vuitton decide to get into the watch business, considering there are so many brands out there already?

Timepieces are necessary when you travel. Here I have a double time zone, which is necessary when I'm here to know the time in France. We have our workshops in Switzerland and, like we do for the trunks and bags, we take care of and control the production. And we are also going to sell our watches only in select Louis Vuitton stores.

How do you intend to compete with other more established brands? Have you lured the serious collectors so far?

That's the first step. We established ourselves in Switzerland five years ago. The Tourbillon was launched three years ago so it took already two years to establish the normal collection. After that also, we launched a second collection, which is the Speedy collection.

So, two years after the beginning, we are now ready and we are able to offer to the client the Tourbillon watch with the Tourbillon mechanism. And even more than just the Tourbillon, we wanted to personalize it.

Next year we're launching another watch, which will have the same concept—completely personalized with a very unique mechanism. Something that not a lot of people are able to make. You don't really see it in the market today, so something again that is exceptional.

How much would it cost on average?

It's always the same price. Even if there are stones like diamonds, it will be the same price. We really want the customer to appreciate the Tourbillon part, the personalization part, and for that there's only one price, which is 165,000 euros (about P10.3 million).

That's expensive!

It's not expensive if you look at the other Tourbillon in the market. We are really the only ones to personalize it, and the only ones to make a personalization with the mechanism.

If you look at the base of the watch, it takes the shape of the LV. So every time we are going to inscribe the initials of the client, we have to remake the whole base of the watch to take the shape of the new initials. So you start from the inside of the watch and everything is made by hand. So it takes time and that's money. It's a long process.

The watch comes in a trunk that's made of Louis Vuitton leather. Clients also have a choice of alligator or stingray straps. The compartment is likewise personalized. It comes with a key ring, and one key can be made for your whole set of luggage. All of this is a whole set of dreams and a chance for you to realize your dreams.

How many have you sold so far in Manila?

We haven't sold any in Manila yet. Perhaps today, we'll see. We are going to put it out in February for the opening of one store in Hong Kong, and it's going to be the celebration version because it's the number 50. We've come up with 50 Tourbillon in three years. The one that is coming out is really exceptional. It's going to be fully paved with baguette diamonds.

How have the timepieces fared in the market since you launched them?

The Louis Vuitton watches are only sold in Louis Vuitton stores and, as I told you, not even in all Louis Vuitton stores, but only in about 30 percent of the shops. So, for this one, for example, we didn't think there would be more than 50 of them. We didn't plan for such a great success. That's why we are now thinking of enlarging the factory because it has been a huge success; considering that it's only been sold in Louis Vuitton stores.

What inspired the design of this particular watch?

In the beginning there was the Tambour collection, the round shape. Tambour means drum. In the beginning, timepieces were found in churches or main places like the city hall. In 1540, the first carry-on watch was in that shape and was called drum. That's why we called it drum, *tambour* in French, and that's why we took the shape of the drum, which is the signature.

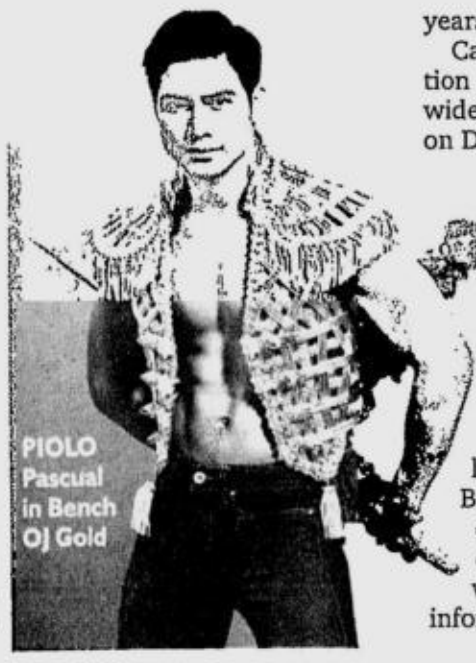
Our first watches had a chocolate-brown dial, but for the first anniversary, we launched this color, which is the opposite color of the monogram. There are yellow hands, which reminds one of the yellow stitching in the bags and trunks. By chance, Louis Vuitton is made of 12 letters, so you can also find the 12 letters here on the case. All the know-how of Louis Vuitton transported into the watches.

E-mail the author at afashion@inquirer.com.ph

Golden Christmas with Piolo

BENCH GETS INTO THE CHIC holiday spirit with its OJ Gold Collection. It's still the same Bench Overhauled Jeans you love—skinny, slim and straight for the men, and slim, skinny and boot-cut for the ladies. Only this time, stylish embellishments in the form of digital-cut "lion logos" on metallic felt materials and gold woven tags and labels have been added to the design.

The jeans are made for men and women who love the spotlight. They're traditional and classic, yet very modern and dynamic and, from a style perspective, very spot-on. The gold-washed denim slim-cut series is in sync with this season's metallic obsession, yet it's subtle enough to be worn for years.


PIOLO Pascual in Bench OJ Gold

Catch the Bench OJ Gold collection in all Bench outlets nationwide. Catch also its stalwart icon on Dec. 15, 6 p.m., as Bench presents Piolo Pascual at Glorietta.

By getting your hands on these uber styling jeans, you get a chance to watch Piolo up close and be one of the 60 lucky viewers to meet and greet him after the show.

Every regular-price Overhauled Jeans purchased in Bench and Herbench Glorietta on Dec. 14-15 earns you an entrance pass. Log on to www.benchtm.com for more information.

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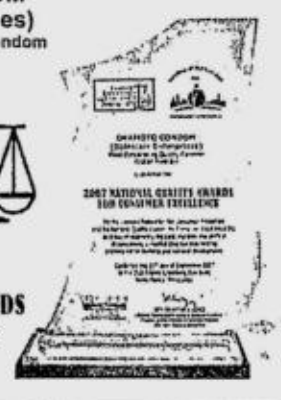

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Scund too good to be true? Joining is easy! Every P500 accumulated valid spend within the promo period using your Metrobank Credit Card entitles you a single raffle entry. Also, Metrobank credit cardholders instantly get a free limited edition stylish bag for a minimum of P10,000 retail spend within one calendar month!

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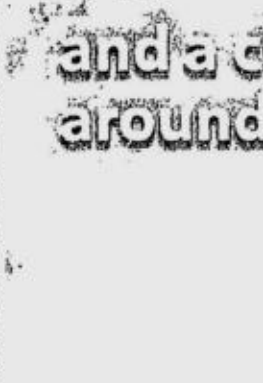

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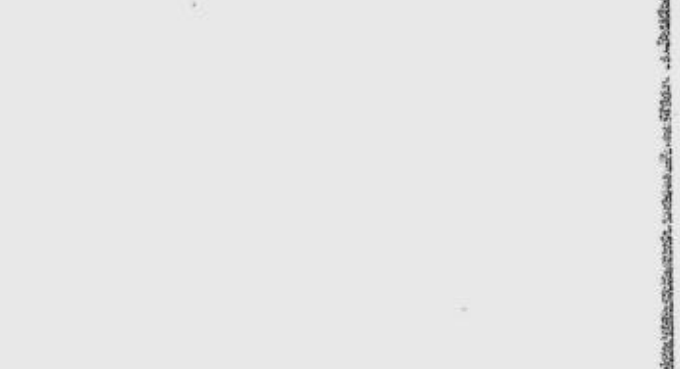

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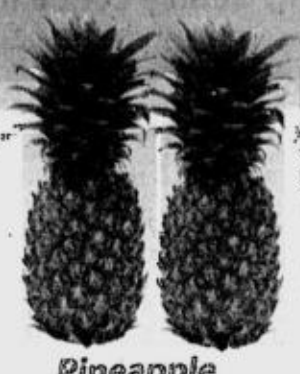

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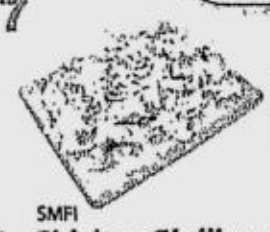

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Sugpo
Medium
₱609 per kg.

Monterey
Rib Roast
₱380 per kg.

Yili
Pure Milk (1Liter)
₱51 per pc.

Yili
Low Fat Hi-Calcium (1Liter)
₱57.05 per pc.

HOT BUY

Nescafe Classic
Refill (100g)
₱63.50 per pc.

Silka
Soap Papaya (135g)
₱31.50 per pc.

Silka
Soap Papaya (90g)
₱24.75 per pc.

Biofit Tea
Trial Pack (5's)
₱22 per box

CDO
Karne Norte (150g)
₱19 per pc.

Daisy
Condensada (300ml)
₱32 per pc.

Meiji
Macadamia Choco (87g)
₱78.25 per pc.

Del Monte
Spaghetti Sauce Sweet Style (750g)
₱60.70 per pc.

Snickers
Peanut (59g)
₱28 per pc.

Del Monte
Spaghetti Sauce Italian Style (750g)
₱57.50 per pc.

Yan Yan
Choco (57g)
₱25 per pc.

Biofit Tea
Box (30's)
₱118 per box

Samba
Brazilian Corned Beef (380g)
₱66.25 per pc.

M & M's
Milk Choco (40g)
₱25.75 per pc.

Bimoli
Vegetable Oil Pouch (2 Liters)
₱137 per pc.

Nestle
Yogurt Berry Mix (125g)
₱30.50 per pc.

El Favorito
Strawberry Iced Cream (1/2Gallon)
₱171 per pc.

Supersavers
Toasted Bread
(50g)
₱13.25 per pc.

Gardenia
Soft Delight Pandesal Family Pack
₱29.50 per pack

Purefoods
Beefies Lots A Cheese Jumbo (1Kg)
₱143 per pack

CDO
Cheesedog Chubbles (1Kg)
₱148 per pack

Listerine
Coolmint (250ml)
₱128 per pc.

Johnson's Baby
Milk Bath with Pump (500ml)
₱147 per pc.

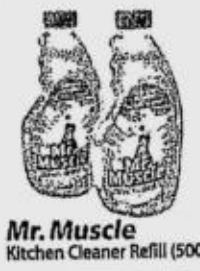
Head & Shoulders
Shampoo Menthol (200ml)
₱94.75 per pc.

Head & Shoulders
Shampoo Menthol (90ml)
₱52.25 per pc.

Those Days
Sanitary Napkin with Wings
₱16.25 per pack

Those Days
Individual Wraps (8's)
₱14.50 per pack

Mr. Muscle
Floor Cleaner (500ml)
₱87.75 per pc.



Mr. Muscle
Kitchen Cleaner Refill (500ml)
₱82.75 per pc.

Alaska
Fresh Milk (1Liter)
₱57.--

Kankunis
Herbal Tea Can (20's)
₱213.--

Murray
Sugar Free Choco Chip Cookies (156g)
₱80.--

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Campbell
Cream of Mushroom (10.25oz)
₱45.--

Zesto One
Grape Pleasure (500ml)
₱17.50

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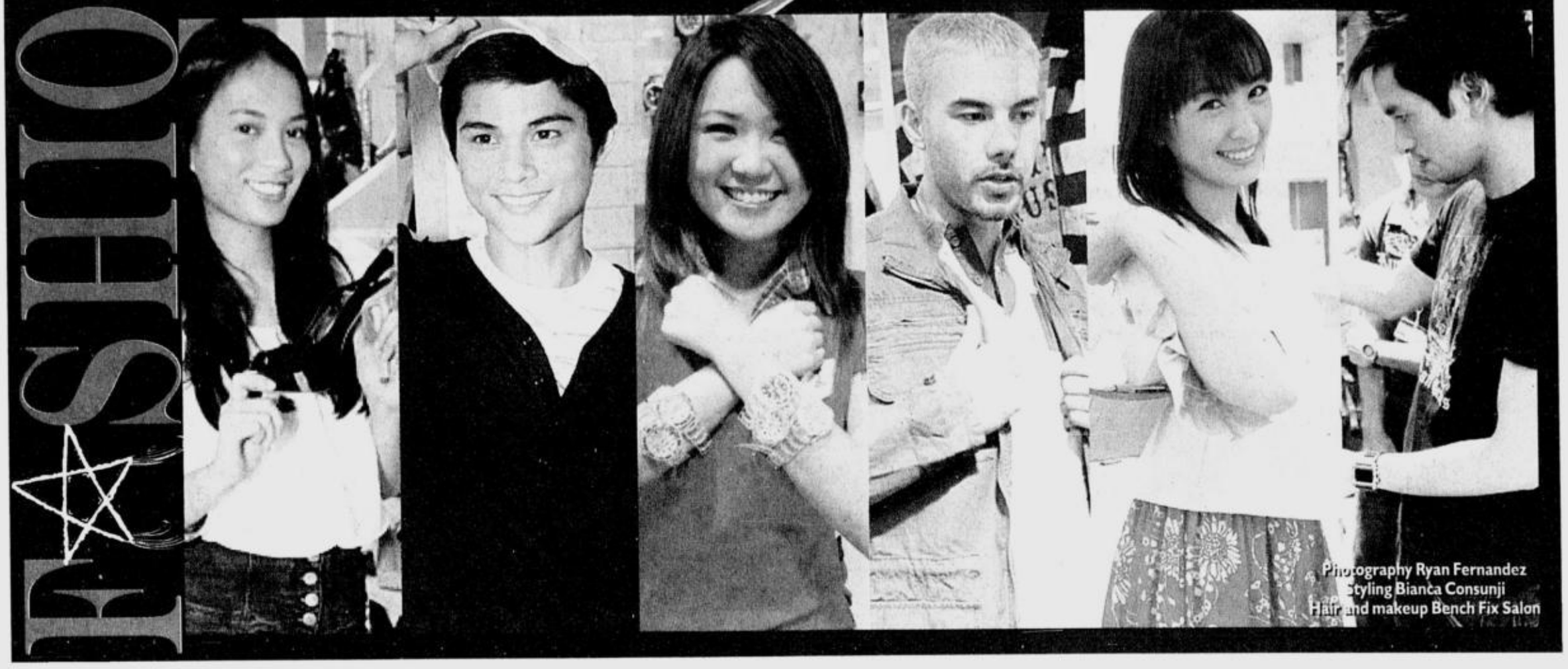
Per DTI-NCR Permit # 4757 Series of 2007.

INQUIRER LIFESTYLE FASHION



Photography Ryan Fernandez
Styling Bianca Consunji
Hair and makeup Bench Fix Salon

Celebrity shopping guide

Read on to find out where to get the best deals this holiday, and for suggestions for party-ready clothing

By Bianca Consunji, *Contributor*

LET'S FACE IT: NOT EVERYONE HAS ALL the time in the world to go shopping this holiday season.

If you're one of those last-minute shoppers, chances are, you'll end up getting food or generic coffee mugs for your family, friends and colleagues. While it really is the thought that counts more than the gift itself, a little extra effort will surely be appreciated by the recipient of the presents.

You can never go wrong with practical gifts such as clothing, accessories, home décor and bath products. For one thing, they don't have an expiry date, so the recipients won't be compelled to force down endless boxes of brownies and fruitcake as the month goes by. Also, these gifts can still be appreciated long after the tinsel and mistletoe have been taken down.

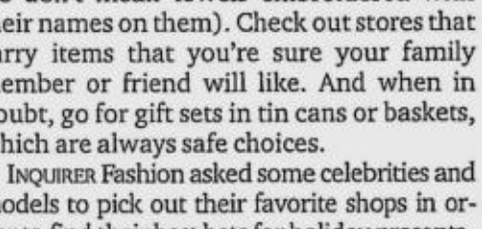
Avoid making your gifts overly boring by personalizing them for the recipient (and we don't mean towels embroidered with their names on them). Check out stores that carry items that you're sure your family member or friend will like. And when in doubt, go for gift sets in tin cans or baskets, which are always safe choices.

INQUIRER Fashion asked some celebrities and models to pick out their favorite shops in order to find their best bets for holiday presents.

Whether you're shopping for your boyfriend, sister, brother, parents, colleagues, *barkada*, or even yourself, we've got you covered. Read on to find out where to get the best deals this holiday, and for suggestions for party-ready clothing.

Carlo Guevarra's picks

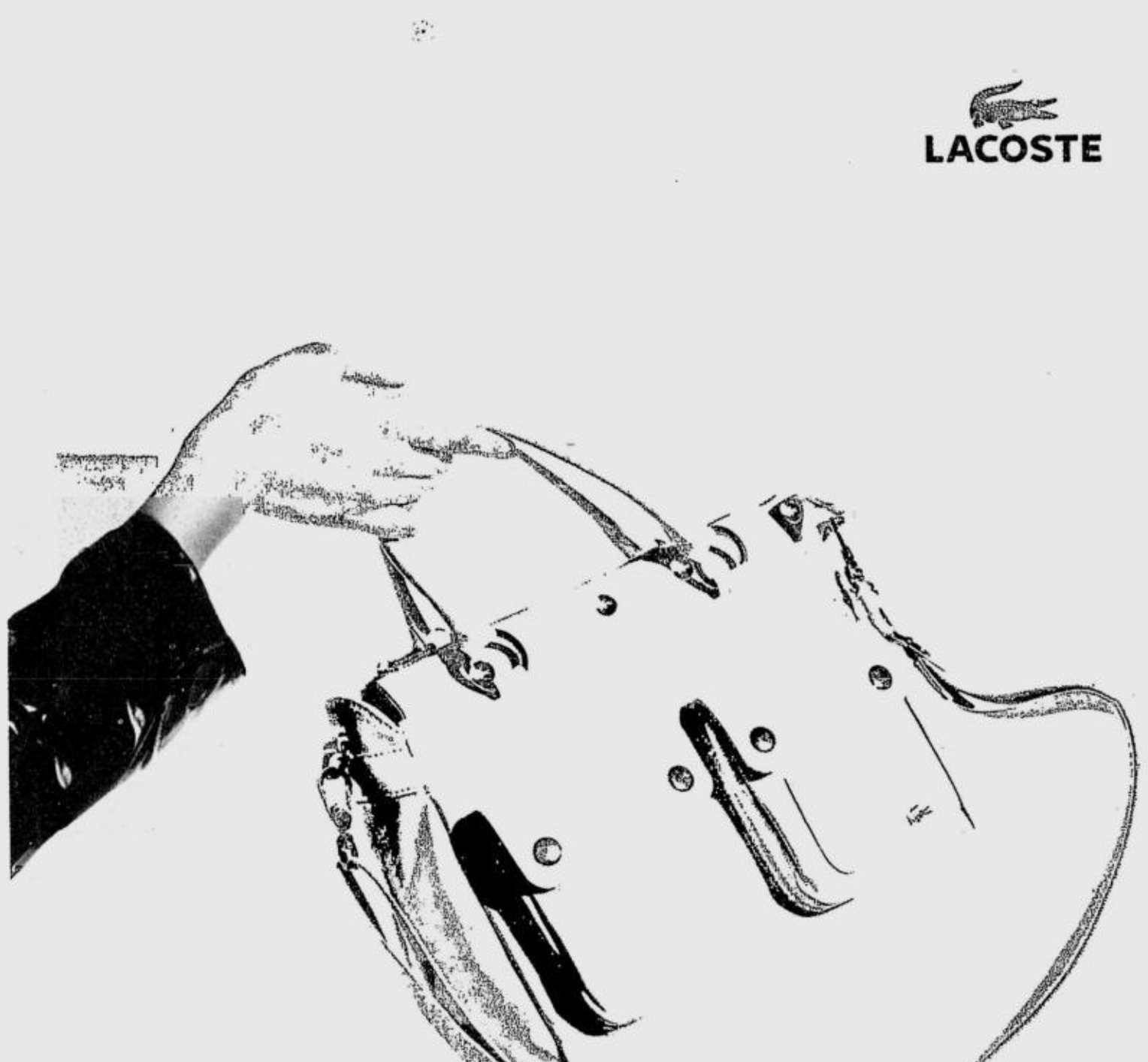
Eighteen-year-old Carlo Guevarra, who went home with the top prize in this year's Bench model search, went in search for stuff for his family. Sweaters, shirts, and home décor from Bench and Dimensione completed his shopping list.



"THESE shirts are perfect for cool December weather." Bench Warmer striped sweater, P699.75

CELEBRITY/ F2

LACOSTE



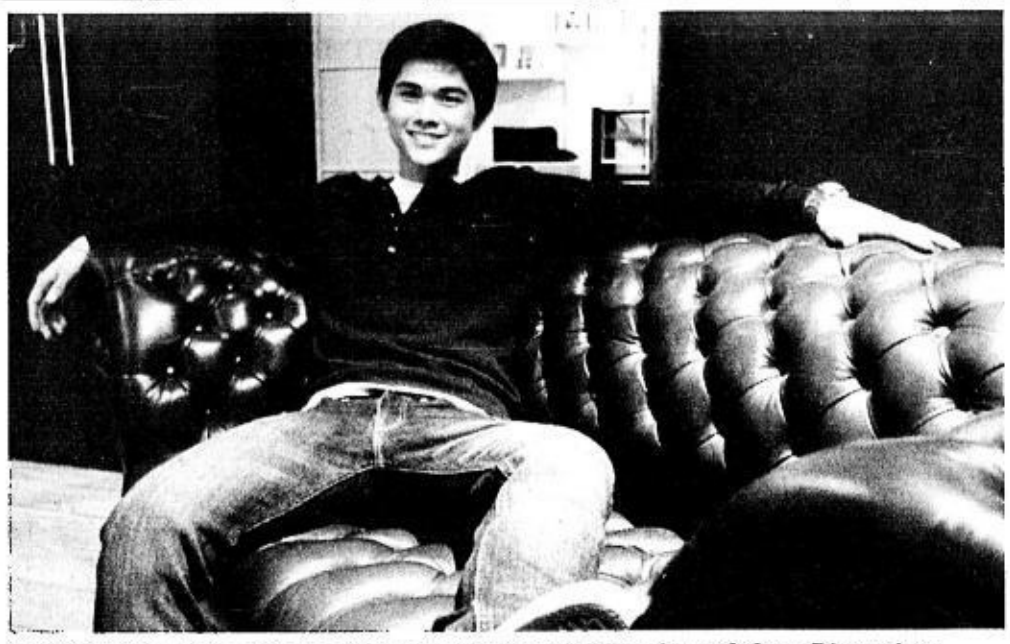
un peu d'air sur terre

www.lacoste.com

LACOSTE ACCESSOIRES: ALABANG TOWN CENTER · GLORIETTA IV · SM MEGAMALL · THE PODIUM
AYALA CENTER, CEBU · ROBINSONS PLACE MANILA · THE POWER PLANT (ROCKWELL CENTER)
GATEWAY MALL, ARANETA CENTER · SM MALL OF ASIA · TRINOMA

...rlo Guevarra's picks

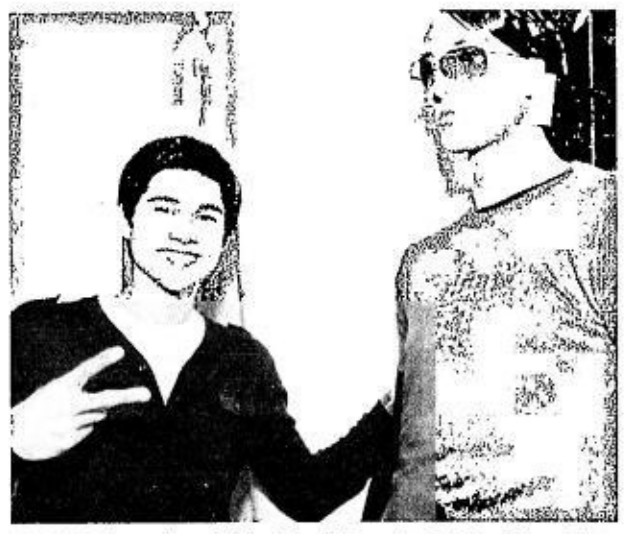
From page F1



"I'D WANT this for our house, it's really comfortable." Leather sofa from Dimensione, P119,800

BASKET of Bench goodies. Towels are paired with body spray or hair gel.

PACK RAT. Porcelain piggy banks from Dimensione, P599.75 each



"I LIKE the print of this shirt." Bench Golden Boy shirt, P349.75

PUPPY chair from Dimensione, P5,295

Rico Blanco's picks

Rico Blanco, one of the endorsers of Human, selects his favorite items from the store.

"COOL graphic design on the jacket." Human jacket, P1,199.75

QUIRKY trinkets make cool presents.

RICO Blanco for Human shirts, P359.75 each

Christine Nieto's picks

Doll-faced Christine Nieto, another Bench finalist, opts for beauty products from The Faceshop and feminine cloth – from Kashieca to the girls in her life.

KASHIECA paisley printed bag, P1,379

KASHIECA makeup pouches for all your friends, P199 each

"IT'S PERFECT for partying!" Green top with rhinestone neckline, P1,299

THE FACESHOP lavender massage salt, P355, and lotion, P445

THE FACESHOP citron and cacao. Shower gel, P535, and exfoliator, P445

Doug Kramer's picks

This basketball hunk chooses clothes that you can wear yourself, or give to the men in your life.

"THIS shirt looks formal, but pair it with jeans and leather shoes, and you're set for a New Year's party." Celio long-sleeve shirt, P2,195

ALDO basic black laptop bags

"THIS jacket is great for warding off cold weather." Celio black jacket, P4,195

ALDO leather loafers are a safe option.

ALDO sporty leather sneakers look funky without being over the top.

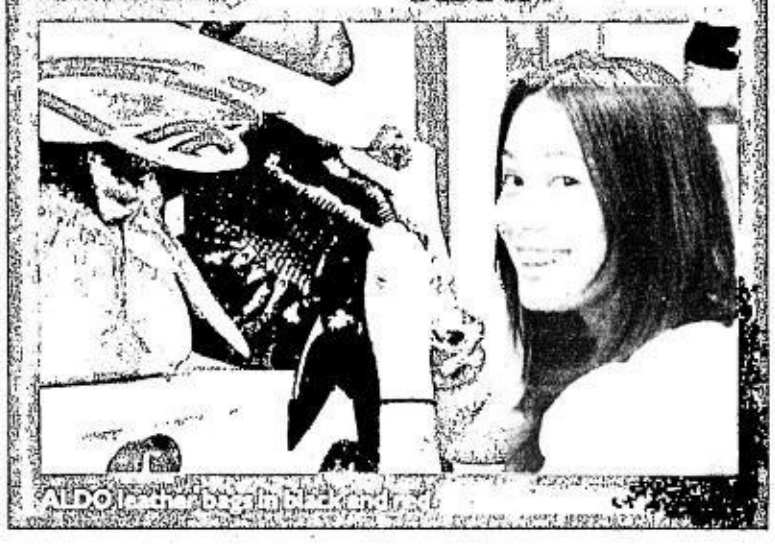
Isabelle Daza's picks

Model Isabelle Daza goes for fashionable pieces that can easily glam up a basic wardrobe.

ALDO patent-leather heels in orange, yellow and red

ALDO gold bandeau and black cocktail skirt

ALDO lilac clutch for dressier days

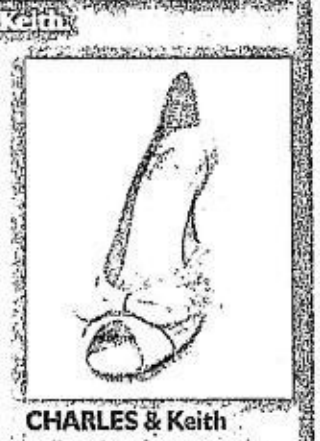


ALDO leather bags in black and red

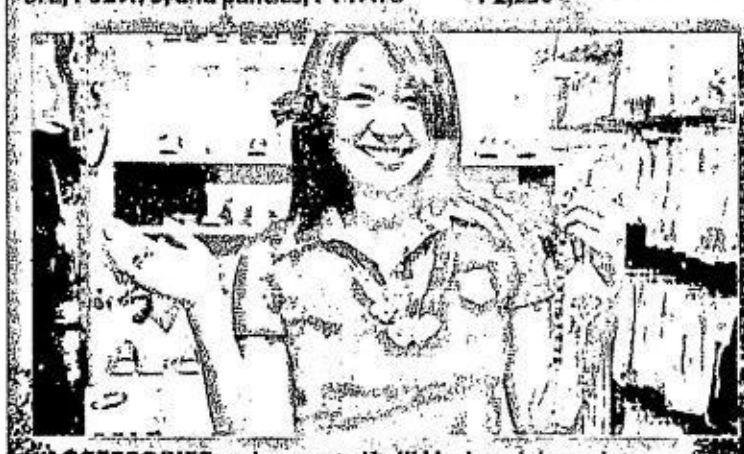
Michelle Carbonell's picks

"I THINK it's sexy for women to wear matching underwear. The print of this set is so cute." Bench Body bra, P329.75, and panties, P149.75

Also a finalist in the Bench model search, Michelle hunted for all things girly for Easter and trends from Hers [illegible] Keith.

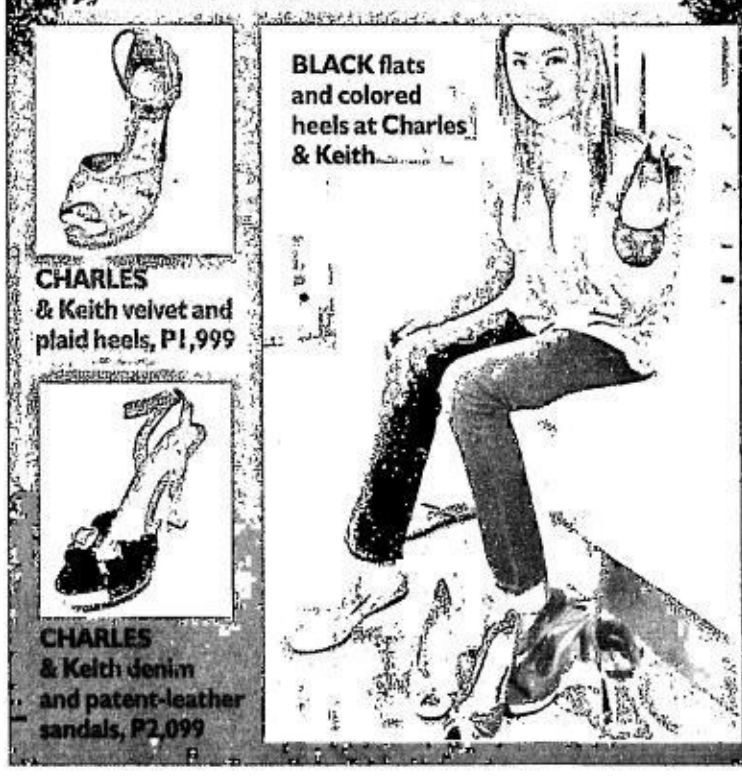


CHARLES & Keith yellow leather pumps, P2,250



ACCESSORIES make great gifts!" Herbench bracelets from P169-P189; necklaces from P160-P220

CHARLES & Keith velvet and plaid heels, P1,999



BLACK flats and colored heels at Charles & Keith

CHARLES & Keith denim and patent-leather sandals, P2,099

Just doing it for Pinoy design

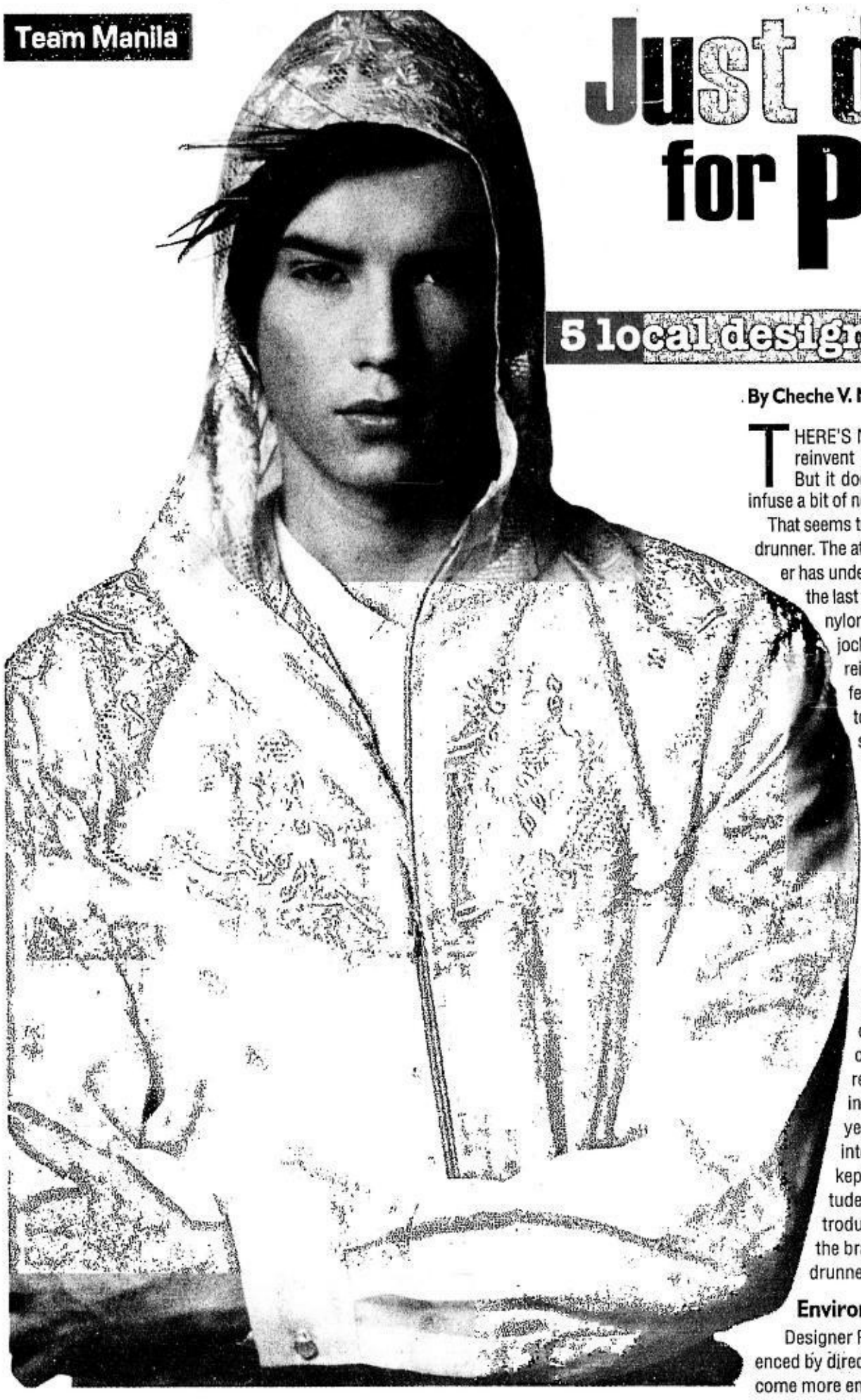
5 local designers reinvent Nike's Windrunner

By Cheche V. Moral

THERE'S NO GOOD EXCUSE TO TOTALLY reinvent a perfectly functioning wheel. But it doesn't mean you can't tweak and infuse a bit of new spin on it from time to time.

That seems to be the case with the Nike Windrunner. The athletic brand's iconic windbreaker has undergone several innovations over the last three decades. From the original nylon jacket designed for serious jocks, the Windrunner has been reissued at varied times using different fabrics and colors, adjusting to the needs and demand of consumers, but at all times maintaining the one integral element of the original design: the 26° chevron point, or the V-shaped pattern across the chest.

For the first time, Nike commissioned five Filipino designers to create their own interpretations of the Windrunner for the year 2020. It may seem like a grandiose exercise for a piece of clothing that was first created in 1978. But Nike's conceit is that the Windrunner has remained one of its most enduring products for the past 25 years—much like how its creator intended it—having continuously kept its relevance amid the multitude of athletic apparel designs introduced to consumers every day; the brand doesn't see how the Windrunner can't survive 13 years more.



Team Manila's *piña* jacket features a zip-up front, and a similarly embroidered 26°element.

Environmental, traditional

Designer Patty Eustaquio's take is influenced by directions that she thinks would "become more entrenched knowledge in society in the years to come: that of having an environmentally conscious lifestyle, and that of reviving or continuing handmade crafts and traditions."

In lieu of technical and synthetic fabrics, Eustaquio opted for all-natural materials as these naturally adjust to the body's temperature depending on external conditions. The result is essentially still a jacket but with longer proportions, including the sleeves. Its wider hood is accented with a band of filigreed leather that mimics the same pattern on the 26°chevron point.

Ever heard of a hoodie barong? Now you have. Team Manila duo Jowee Alviar and Mon Punzalan remade the Windrunner in the exact likeness of the national dress shirt, but with an embroidered hood. This version of the jacket is not just the graphic designers' spin on the Windrunner, but also how they envision the barong Tagalog fitting into the modern lifestyle of the urban Filipino man.

Inspired by 'Star Wars'

Young designer Louis Claparols looked not to the future for inspiration but to a futuristic film that came out even before the original Windrunner was created. His cream-and-white rendering using embroidered cotton twill and cotton jersey evokes Luke Skywalker in the 1977 "Star Wars" film.

The jacket features double sleeves and chevron details on the sleeves. It also has orange leather pull tags that give it a sporty-street edge.

Mistresses of vintage and reinvention, the I Love You trio of Mimi Sanson, Corinne Ching and Sharon Atillo created what could possibly be the most radical nip-and-tucking of the jacket in this bunch. The girls used, or rather reused, a mishmash of vintage materials, to come up with a fantastical one-sleeved design, with just a bold band of red-and-black animal print fabric across the chest as its concession to the original design.

Ronald Pasion of WARP fame signals his comeback with his utilitarian version of the Windrunner—made of thick camouflage-print nylon with multiple pockets. Its hood distinctly features a visor.

Pasion's concept leans toward technology—a foretaste of what people can expect next from this designer—and not far removed from Windrunner creator Geoff Hollister's original idea for the jacket. Hollister's design was inspired by the capes worn by the Native Americans to ward off the cold in the Pacific Northwest's sodden and windy winters. They were made of woven cedar barks.

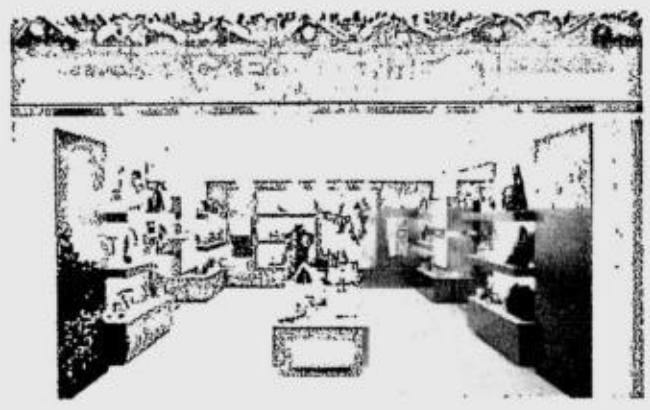
For the original Windrunner, Hollister substituted the tree bark with nylon. It featured a microthin coated water-repellent polyurethane on the 26°upper and a lower that had vented insets for breathability.

It's worth noting that Hollister always referred to his design as the "Cape Suit" (only officially christened "Windrunner" when it was included in the Nike apparel catalog in 1982) as its 26°element (which came in many colors) was said to have imparted superhero-like stance to the athletes who first wore it.

The Filipino designers' versions will not be sold but will be installed at select Nike stores this holiday season.

PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK NICDAO OF WILDBUNCHPLUS
STYLING: ANA KALAW
HAIR AND MAKEUP: STACEY GANA
MODELS: ALFREDO DE SILVA AND KIM ROSS DE LOS SANTOS OF MERCATOR MODEL MANAGEMENT

NEWLY opened Tumi boutique carries a complete range of travel, business and lifestyle accessories.



CHECK out the only Celine boutique in the country at Duty Free Philippines' Fiesta Mall.

Duty-free feasting

REMEMBER WHEN COMING home from a trip out of the country just wasn't complete without a stop at Duty Free Philippines' Fiesta Mall?

Lately, with most hard-to-find brands being brought in by high-end department stores, many travelers have stopped making that Duty Free visit a habit.

The good news is that the Duty Free Fiesta Mall is now giving you more than one reason to make that shopping stopover a ritual once again. The strong peso, together with "duty free prices" plus a vast assortment of merchandise to choose from, makes Fiesta Mall a shopper's dream.

Duty Free Fiesta Mall's Wines and Spirits collection carries the widest selection of fine wines and liquor gathered under one roof. Wine enthusiasts will be hard-pressed to find a more extensive list anywhere in the country. Discerning consumers will also appreciate the premiere scotch, cognac and vodka brands Duty Free has to offer.

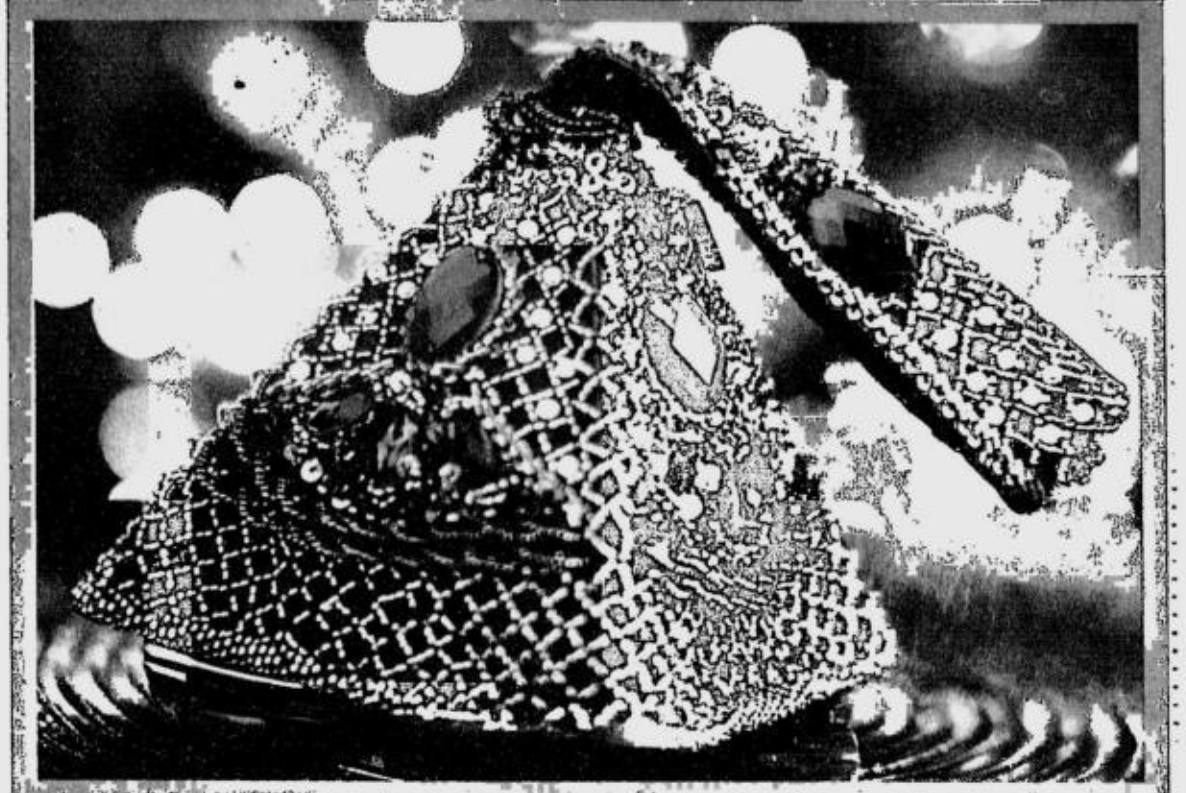
The Confectionery section is a haven for serious chocoholics. The only place in the Philippines that sells premium Godiva chocolates alongside childhood favorites like Hershey's, M&M's, Toblerone and Cadbury will make any sweet tooth's mouth water.

Luxury brands have made a home for themselves in Duty Free Philippines, too. The newly opened Tumi boutique carries the complete range of travel, business and lifestyle accessories. Burberry, Dunhill, Longchamps, Salvatore Ferragamo, and the only Celine boutique in the country are also all in store. These will soon be followed by the Philippine debut of Vertu, the world's only hand-built mobile handset.

Beauty junkies will be thrilled to discover that Duty Free's Beauty Walk section has had a makeover. Cult brands like Jurlique, Acca Kappa, L'Occitane and Shu Uemura, just to name a few, are now available at duty-free prices. Plus, there are rows upon rows of the latest fragrances for men and women.

On your next trip back, don't forget to pass by Duty Free Philippines' Fiesta Mall and check out what's new. Open until 2 a.m. for the holiday season, it's the perfect place for all your Christmas shopping.

FRENCH legendary fashion designer Yves Saint Laurent, announces his retirement from the world of haute couture fashion in Paris. French President Nicolas Sarkozy honored 71-year-old fashion designer Yves Saint Laurent on Dec. 6 with a Legion of Honor medal. The fashion great, who retired in 2002, was named a "grand officer," one of the highest ranks in the prestigious Legion of Honor. Actress Catherine Deneuve, a Saint Laurent devotee, and Pierre Berge, the designer's longtime business partner, attended the ceremony at Saint Laurent's home in Paris. AP



Plum pyramid-cut, slim fully beaded rectangular purse with crystals, glass beads and sequins

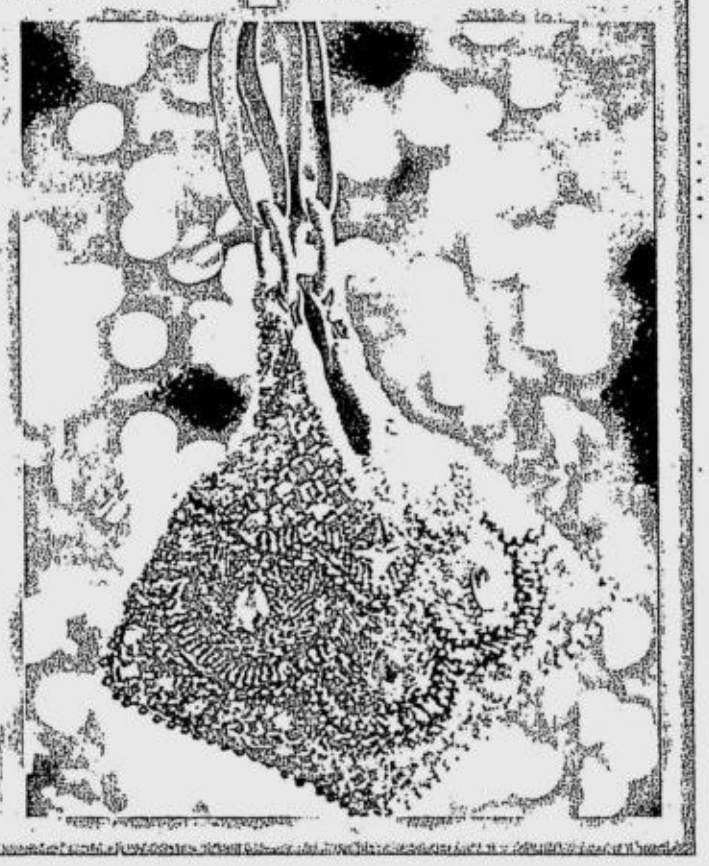
Bags that sparkle!

Still don't know what to get that special woman in your life? Be the sparkle and thrill with one of Aranaz's luxurious handbeaded confections.

Inspired by the Filipino Christmas lantern, the holiday 2007 limited edition Parol Collection offers fully embellished diamond and star-shaped purse that is the perfect outfit topper. Created using traditional beading techniques, these decadent pieces are adorned with an array of Swarovski crystal, mother-of-pearl, glass beads and sequins.

Exclusively available at Aranaz, 2/F, Power Plant Mall.

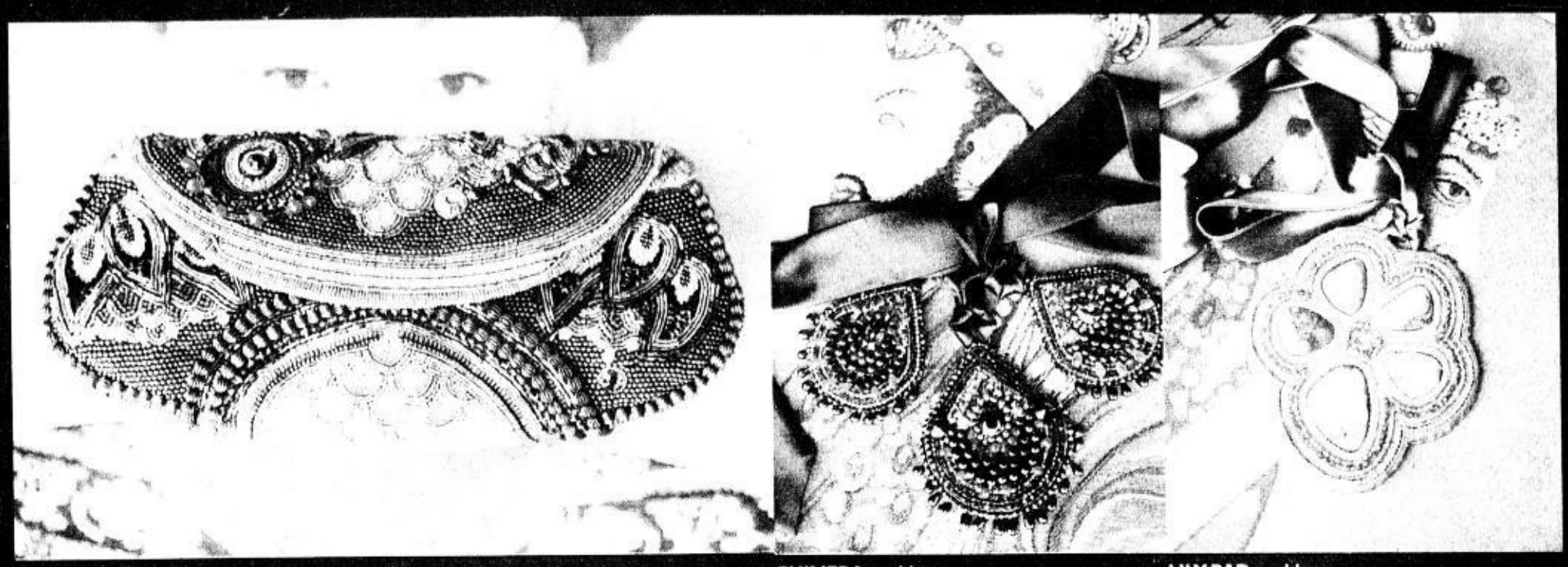
Scalloped star-shaped purse with Swarovski crystals, glass beads and sequins



CROSSINGS
Don't just dress up your tree this Christmas.
The holiday fashion collection.
Holiday discounts up to 30% off on selected regular items on Dec. 7-16, 2007.
TriNoma Mall, Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Quezon Avenue, The Ramp Podium, The Ramp Glorietta 4.
www.crossings.com.ph
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. A3-0999, Series of 2007.

FASHION

LIFESTYLE



FIGARO clutch CHIMERA necklace LILY PAD necklace

When gratitude becomes chic

As a way of saying 'Salamat,' Bea Valdes has come up with a capsule collection of bags and jewelry exclusively for the Philippines

Text by Alex Y. Vergara
Photos by Bahag BWP

EVEN IN THIS SUPPOSED season of giving, a seemingly innocuous activity such as Christmas shopping is bound to be a test of selflessness and goodwill among Bea Valdes' legions of fans.

As her way of saying thank you to friends and supporters, the celebrated Filipino bag and accessories designer has come up with a capsule collection consisting of four intricately beaded bags and 16 statement necklaces exclusively for the Philippine market.

"I've been wanting to do this collection for Firma for the longest time," says Valdes. "The problem was finding the time to do it because I wanted to come up with something special based on my signature pieces."

Since her Philippine debut several fashion seasons ago, Valdes has been catering exclusively to an ever-growing foreign clientele. From four people, she now manages an army of 40 craftsmen (majority of them are women) in her office-cum-factory in Bicutan.

Her sister and business partner, Marga, is the company's marketing manager, while their mom Pamela is the operations manager.

To further spice up the situation, Valdes gave birth four months ago to Bella, her daughter by boyfriend Archie Rodriguez. Whereas she used to devote her time to designing and supervising the production of her pieces, the first-time mom now has to personally attend to Bella as much as possible.

"Before it was more spontaneous," she says of her design process. "Now I spend most of my evenings researching and working on my designs. I leave for the office in the morning and go home by 2 p.m. I now try to get everything done within that period of time."

Although they're nowhere to be found in the Philippines, her creations, which carry her name, now grace the shelves of such upscale stores as Barney's, Saks Fifth Avenue and Harvey Nicks. Apart from such hotels as the Dorchester and Wynn, the items are also carried by a number of upscale jewelry stores in Europe, Mauritius and even Kazakhstan.

Her pieces have also made it to the pages of American glossies such as Vogue and graced the arms and necks of high-profile celebrities like actress Sharon Stone, supermodel Christy Turlington and fashion designer Rachel Roy.

WHEN/ G4

ACCESSORIES and bag designer Bea Valdes

It's NINETEEN MINUTES before midnight.
Everyman and woman was silent as we sat
Waiting for THE EXPECTED ONE. THE BRETHREN
ABSOLUTE FRIENDS and even Best Enemies held
hands in Thanksgiving.
A reverent hush filled the air and I believe
that ANGELS & DEMONS alike held their breaths
in SILENT HONOR of the birth of
THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS.
What's your Christmas story?
Make your Christmas story warmer with
and even brighter with
National Book Store

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19,0
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*programmatic accreditation by the accrediting commission of the American Culinary Federation Foundation

OUR 11TH NIVERSARY, 000 CHEFS PARED THIS ECIAL DISH FOR US.

The accreditation of our academic programs at CCA, that is.*

Which means a lot because it comes from
the biggest (membership: 19,000) and most prestigious
organization of professional chefs in the world today,
the American Culinary Federation.

The ACF bestowed this honor upon us this year,
coinciding with our 11th anniversary.
Giving us another reason to celebrate.

Not because it makes CCA the first culinary institution
in Asia to be given ACF accreditation.
But more because it allows our graduates
to virtually work anywhere in the world
as certified culinarians.

Which to us, is simply sumptuous.

CCA
Center for Culinary Arts, Manila

www.cca-manila.com

CLOCKWISE from left: Java clutch, Rappanui necklace, Caliope day bag, Cleo evening bag, Medusa necklace, Griffin necklace

When gratitude becomes chic

From page G1

These developments, of course, apart from the exquisite bags and necklaces themselves, have made Valdes' creations all the more covetable to not a few Filipino women. Perhaps, through this holiday series, they now have a chance to own at least one Bea Valdes.

Reunion

This rare occasion is also a reunion of sorts between Valdes and Firma owners Ricky Toledo and Chito Vijandre. It was Firma, after all, which featured Valdes' debut collection three years ago. It was also the collection that launched her in the US.

This time, however, Valdes' stuff is on display at AC+632 in Greenbelt 5. Vijandre and Toledo also own and manage the newly opened high-end boutique in Makati that specializes in "heirloom" brands and bespoke items inspired by Old World traditions.

Due to the limited number of the new series, we won't be surprised if a mad scramble ensues among Manila's fashionistas as they try to be the first to get their hands on these one-of-a-kind must-haves. Indeed, hell hath no fury than a determined Christmas shopper scorned!

Like her previous pieces, the series has a way of beguiling the eyes, with its array of colors and textures resulting from a painstaking and ingenious assembly of glass beads, resins, Swarovski crystals and semi-precious stones such as onyx, garnets, agates and turquoise.

"Since they're based on my signature pieces, some of them look similar to what I've done before," she says. "But they're all unique from each other and smaller in scale."

Valdes took into consideration the Asian frame in her decision to tone down the size of her eye-catching series of pendants. What's more, they're all strung together by fine satin ribbons to allow the wearer to adjust the pendants' positions.

"You can wear them high up or low depending on your mood, the event and the dress," she says. "I want the jewelry pieces to have some sort of different personalities and different lives."

If anything, success and motherhood have yet to hamper Valdes' creativity. In fact, says Toledo, her pieces have become all the more intricate and refined through the years.

"Bea always comes up with something different that never fails to catch your attention," he says. "She's one designer who's way ahead of her time."

THE DESIGNER with sister and business partner in charge of sales and marketing Marga Valdes

Problem downloading?

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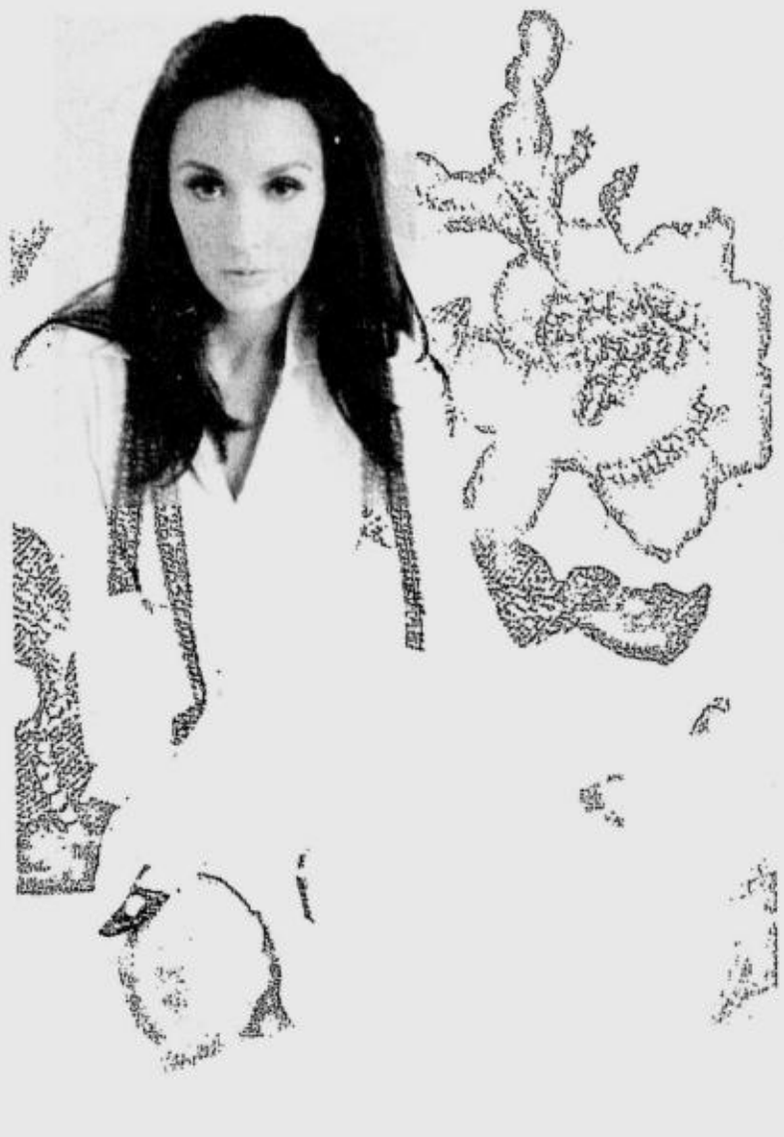
Will the Filipino fashion designer make it this time?



LIFE-STYLED
Thelma Sioson San Juan

Randy Ortiz, Lulu Tan-Gan and others opening their shops at Greenbelt 5 are convinced they can

THE YEAR 2007 WILL BE remembered as the year the Filipino fashion designer boldly ventured out again—from the catwalk to the high-end retail mall—to stand shoulder to shoulder alongside foreign luxury brands, if not compete directly with them.

Late Tuesday night, after a heavy meal, **Budji Layug** and I took a stroll from Greenbelt 3 to Greenbelt 5 to see the much-talked-about space of Budji Living.

The space is huge; it occupies three floors, with a panoramic view of Greenbelt park. It must be the only store in that mall with floor-to-ceiling windows. Budji's concept is unique and striking, but more on that next year.

The air on the second and third floors was so thick with construction smell that we had to cover our nose as we wandered around. Yet despite the discomfort, we felt a sense of pride knowing all the stores would showcase Filipino talent and creativity in an era when you must go global or perish.

Lulu Tan-Gan

Just the night before, we went to the opening of **Lulu Tan-Gan**'s L Manila, also on the second floor of Greenbelt 5, in the Filipino Designer wing.

We ended snapping up an **Arcy Gayatin** black jersey long dress with mother-of-

WILL/ H2

COLONIAL CHARM, the premier collection of L Ltd., limited-edition of Tan-Gan, is exclusively available at L Manila in Greenbelt 5.

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SO EN
HOLIDAY COLLECTION

Will the Filipino fashion designer make it this time?

From page H1

pearl circles strewn that looked like polka dots from afar. The dress was seamless and fluid.

The store is another milestone in the career and even the personal life of Lulu, the staunch veteran of Philippine RTW. Lulu has singlehandedly and steadfastly stood for knitwear in Philippine fashion.

At L Manila, Lulu wants to project fashion design—but inspired by Philippine art, culture and lifestyle. It's Filipino aesthetic and design sensibility as applied to fashion. Yet Lulu stresses that the design must at the same time be contemporary and integrated in today's lifestyle.

Lulu said she wants "to create global contemporary Filipino brand, inspired by Filipino costumes, art, history, rather than just following the dictates of the catwalk."

She has harnessed Filipino talent for the average-size store—**Ivy Almario** for the interiors (with grand lanterns over the fitting cubicles and Lulu's sketches on the walls); **Arcy Gayatin** of Cebu; maverick **Puey Quinones**; and queen of whimsy **Tippi Ocampo**.

The store also features Lulu's finds: Capulla crocheted copper wire accessories and bags, **Monique Albert's** rhinestone sandals, **Jen Sarmiento's** woven and metallic bags, and **Twinkle Samson's** pure leather bags.

All items are 95-percent handcrafted.

When you check out the store, watch out for Arcy's piña bolero and organza dresses with geometric fabric cutouts. I've always believed that Arcy is one of the best Filipino designers—highly instinctive yet logical in her approach to design.

ELEGANT and stylish knitwear by Tan-Gan

She has an adept and very ingenious way with fabrics, whether lace, jersey, piña or organza. Her fabric treatment gives you a unique wardrobe; you can be sure you won't look like another guest at a party.

She can shred the fabric to use as trimmings, or cut it out, dye it, the possibilities are limitless.

Puey is preparing for his gala in January. It will echo his direction—transformation.

He transforms a piña cut like a sarong into a cowl-necked dress gathered and sashed at the back. His clothes at L Manila are one-piece ensembles that can be worn many ways. They are worth trying out because you want a new twist to your wardrobe—and because they hide your bulges.

Tippi's clothes are, shall we say, "happy." They always have a touch of whimsy. They are young but with a mature fit.

STYLISH wardrobe for career-oriented women

Randy Ortiz

A step away from L Manila is **Randy Ortiz's** Myth. A showcase of Randy's clothes, accessories and lifestyle products, it also features the clothes of **Jojie Lloren, Dennis Lustico, Ivarluski Aseron** and **Joey Samson**, the cosmetics of **Henri Calayag**, and the hair products of **Jing Monis**.

Randy is proud about the product development which took some time.

"This exercise is all about branding," Randy told us. "What made in the Philippines is about. Not made in China. We sourced the cuff links in Las Piñas, the leather in Marikina for bags and belts."

Randy said even the candles, the hair and cosmetics products were sourced here or formulated by Filipino chemists.

It is the Filipino designer's foray into luxe. Randy said, "Our pricing is cheaper than imported brands, but not in the low end of the *tiangge*." The prices range from P1,500-P10,000 (a men's suit with signature stitching).

More important to us women, the clothes come in very limited edition.

Actually, you can also shop for your man at Myth. The cuff links are a good buy, and so are the shirts.

The items sold like hot cakes at the opening. Asked if he's optimistic about business, Randy said, "Very."

In truth, what Lulu, Randy and other designers are discovering this year is their niche: more affordable than luxury imported brands, yet yielding good quality. And-most important—they have the design you can wear.

Vic Barba has also opened his store at Greenbelt 5.

In the next few weeks, more are opening their stores: **Cesar Gaupo, Patrice Ramos, Amina Aranaz, Jun Escario,** and **Butch Carugay's** Avatar.

For those shopping for home and lifestyle products, the unbeatable pair of **Chito Vijandre** and **Ricky Toledo** is opening a 120 sqm store named AC+632. (That's the country and area code, by the way.)

Then there are culinary concepts by young restaurateurs and entrepreneurs: chef **Bambi Sy Gobio's** Restaurante Damaso serving Filipino cuisine inspired by the "Noli Me Tangere" era; and actor **Marvin Agustin's** John and Yoko, a cosmopolitan Japanese store.

Will the Filipino designer succeed this time in retail? I believe so. They have learned from the mistakes of the '70s and the '80s.

This time, they know how to apply what's Filipino—in design and inspiration—to what is contemporary and global. What makes their products stand apart from foreign brands? Design.

Christmas Best Buys

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42" LCD TV
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47PFL7422/79 Php169,980
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12 months 0% Free HTS3548W
18 months 0%

42PFL7422/79 Php114,980
42" LCD TV
Cash Php15,000 less
12 months 0% Php5,000 less
18 months 0%

32PFL9432/98 Php94,980
32" LCD TV
Cash Php10,000 less
12 months 0% Php5,000 less
18 months 0%

37PFL7422/79 Php79,980
37" LCD TV
Cash Php10,000 less
12 months 0% Php5,000 less

32PFL7422/79 Php54,980
32" LCD TV
Cash Php5,000 less
plus Free HTS3010
12 months 0% Php2,000 less
plus Free HTS3010

42TA2800/79 Php99,980
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- Ground Flr., Trinoma Mall. Tel. no. 915-3922/915-3920
- 3rd Flr., Landmark Dept. Store, Trinoma Mall. Tel. no. 922-0644/922-0617
- 2nd Level, Alabang Town Center, Madrigal Avenue Entrance. Tel. no. 772-3684
- 2nd Flr., Cash And Carry Mall
- 800, Salazar St., Cor. Ongpin, Manila. Tel. no. 243-2092/97/243-2101

PHILIPS
sense and simplicity

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 3867 Series of 2007

WOMEN'S GT Gane by Simple, with bamboo linings, wooden button, removable natural laytex pedbed with a cotton canvas cover and natural crepe rubber midsole

Feed your feet

RES|TOE|RUN, A NEW MULTI-brand shoe store, is bringing into the country a whole new world of shoe shopping experience with the wide array of rare brands it carries.

Owned by Primer Group of Companies, which created the brands The Travel Club and Bratpack, Res|Toe|Run was named after the three footwear categories that the store carries.

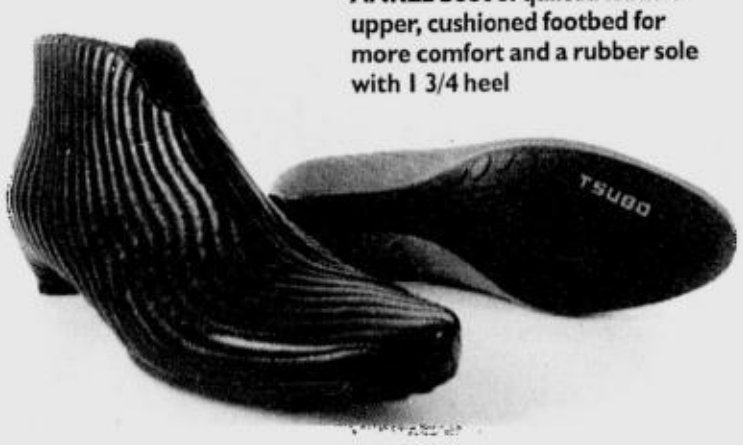
RES represents casual footwear. TOE is composed of toe-flaunting sandals and flip-flops. RUN is made up of athletic and athlete-inspired footwear. Thus the name Res|Toe|Run.

Apart from variety, the shoe store boasts of exclusivity. The items are mostly non-mainstream brands, though sought-after in the world market.

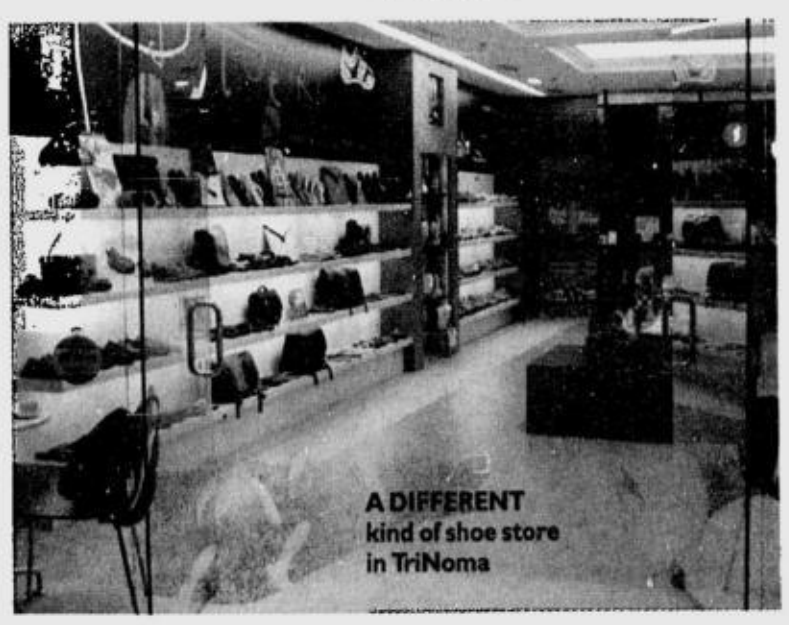
Designed by architect Dindo Guevarra, the Res|Toe|Run store in TriNoma houses brands such as the Sanuk sandal collection, designed for the global surf and water community.

A favorite of surfers like Shane Dorian and Donavon, the brand has Jellies, indoor-outdoor flip-flops and Guatemalan blanket thongs. Res|Toe|Run also exclusively carries the Tsubo brand, which boasts of trademark bubbles that cushion the soles and flexible soft materials that flex in the right places.

Res|Toe|Run is at 2/L, TriNoma mall, QC.



ANKLE boot of quilted leather upper, cushioned footbed for more comfort and a rubber sole with 1 3/4 heel



JACK Nicklaus ladies micro-fiber jacket

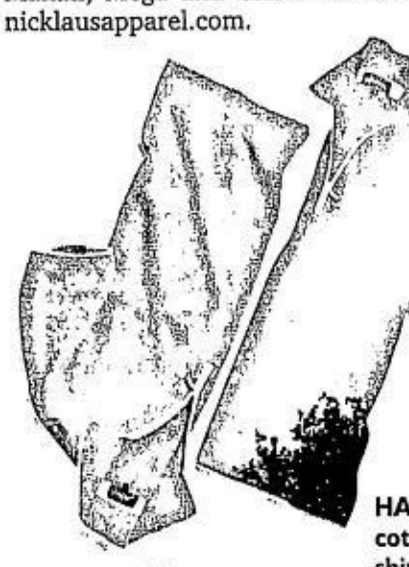
Fashion for champions

FROM LUXURIOUSLY SOFT, NATURAL colors to the most technologically advanced fibers, the Jack Nicklaus leisure and sports clothing line is especially crafted to measure up to various expectations in style, comfort, and function on and off the field.

The woven shirt projects the bearings of a true winner whether worn loose and casual or fit and proper. The knit shirt cuts a fine silhouette whether buttoned down or fastened up to the neck.

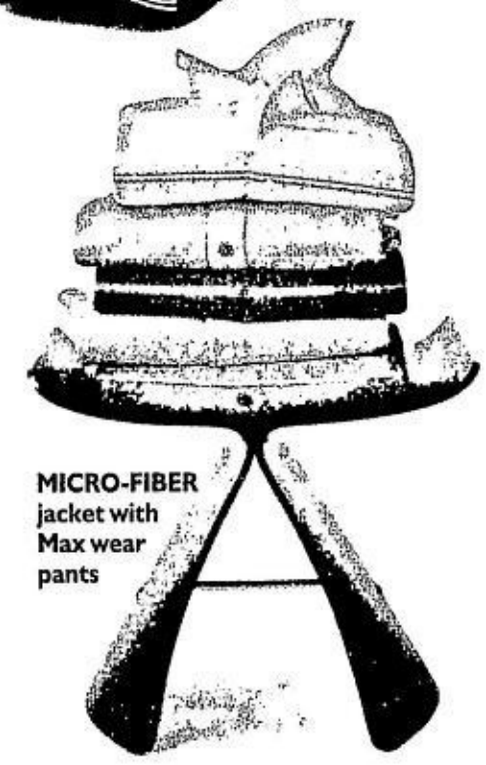
The season's winning colors are Lime, Lake, Peacoat, Scarlet and Sun Orange.

Jack Nicklaus apparel is exclusively marketed by Rustan Marketing Corp. and is available at Rustan's Makati, Shangri-La Plaza, Alabang Town Center, Gateway Mall Cubao, Robinson's Place Ermita, Ayala Center Cebu, Landmark Trinoma, Shoemart Makati, Mega and Clark. Visit www.jacknicklausapparel.com.

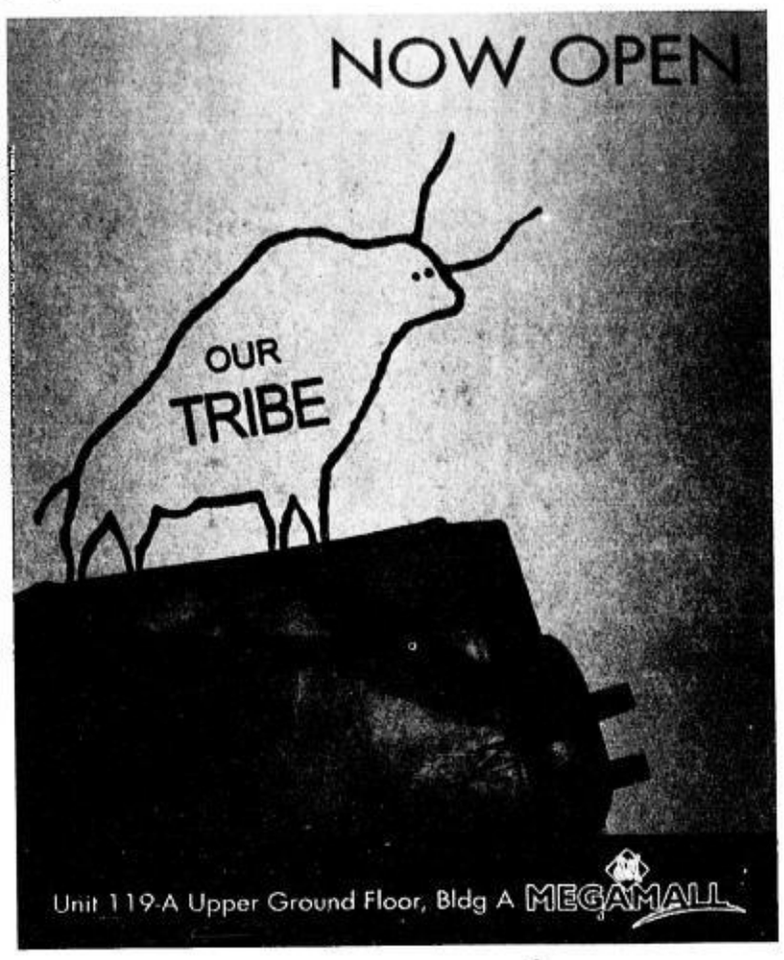


HALF-ZIP cotton knit shirt

18-MAJORS signature caps



MICRO-FIBER jacket with Max wear pants



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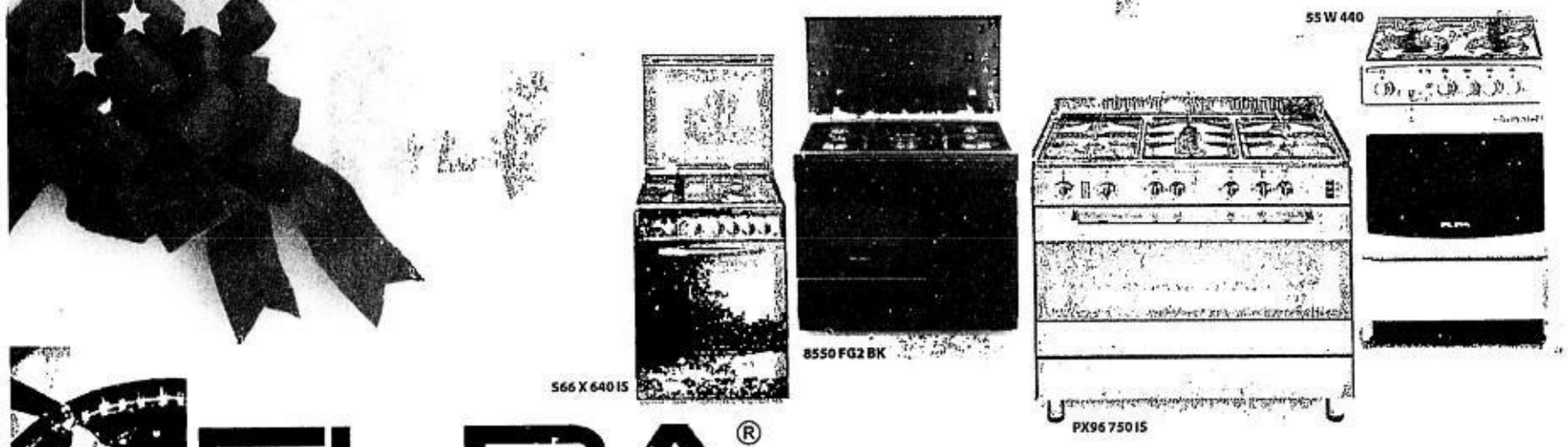
And know why ELBA is part of their lives now and for years to come. And why it could be the heart of your kitchen.



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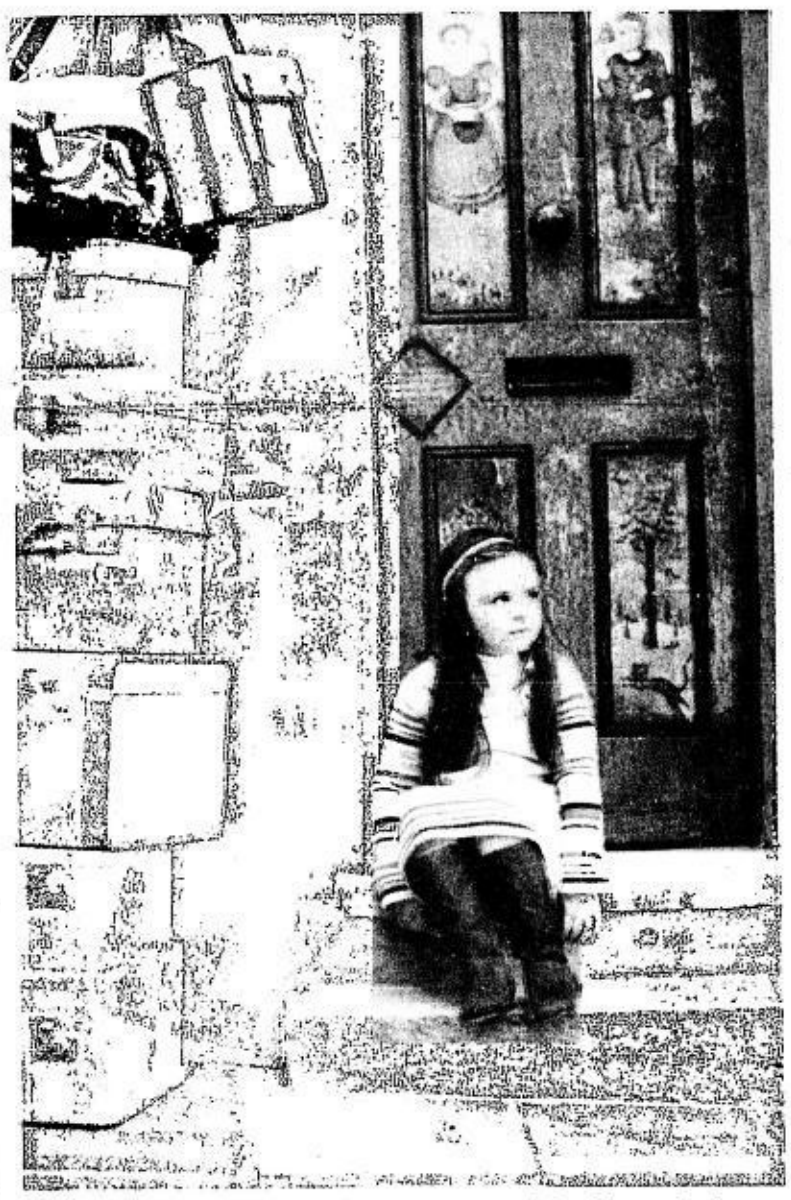
LITTLE girls look extra charming in adorable party dresses that make them feel like princesses.

LET YOUR little boys run around in style in colorful rugby tops paired with jeans.

Starting 'em young on designer duds



BUTTERFLY by Matthew Williamson super-soft lamb's wool, mix-pattern knitted dress with hood and tights

FROM COLORFUL floral pieces for little girls to clean, preppy rugby tops for young boys, Debenhams' children's wear collection is extensive this holiday season.

This season, Debenhams' kids' wear collection is from exclusive Designer at Debenhams brand names, such as Junior J by Jasper Conran, Rocha.Little Rocha, St. George by Duffer and Butterfly by Matthew Williamson.

The fall collection sees baby girls in adorable floral-print dresses with coordinating separates, striped knitted playsuits, or embroidered tops worn with pull-on denim jeans.

Toddler girls will look extra charming wearing bright floral print corduroy shirt dresses.

For baby boys, it's all about rugby-style romper suits and striped T-shirts paired with elastic waist denim jeans.

Toddler boys will look adorable in multi-striped jumpers and denim jeans with a cinch-back waist detail.

For fashionable little girls, knitted dresses from Butterfly by Matthew Williamson and J by Jasper Conran can be easily slipped on with colored tights to create a sense of style.

Floral-print tops and denim jeans with embroidered details create a more feminine look.

Little boys, on the other hand, can romp in style by layering key pieces like shirts in checks or stripes with hooded sweatshirts.

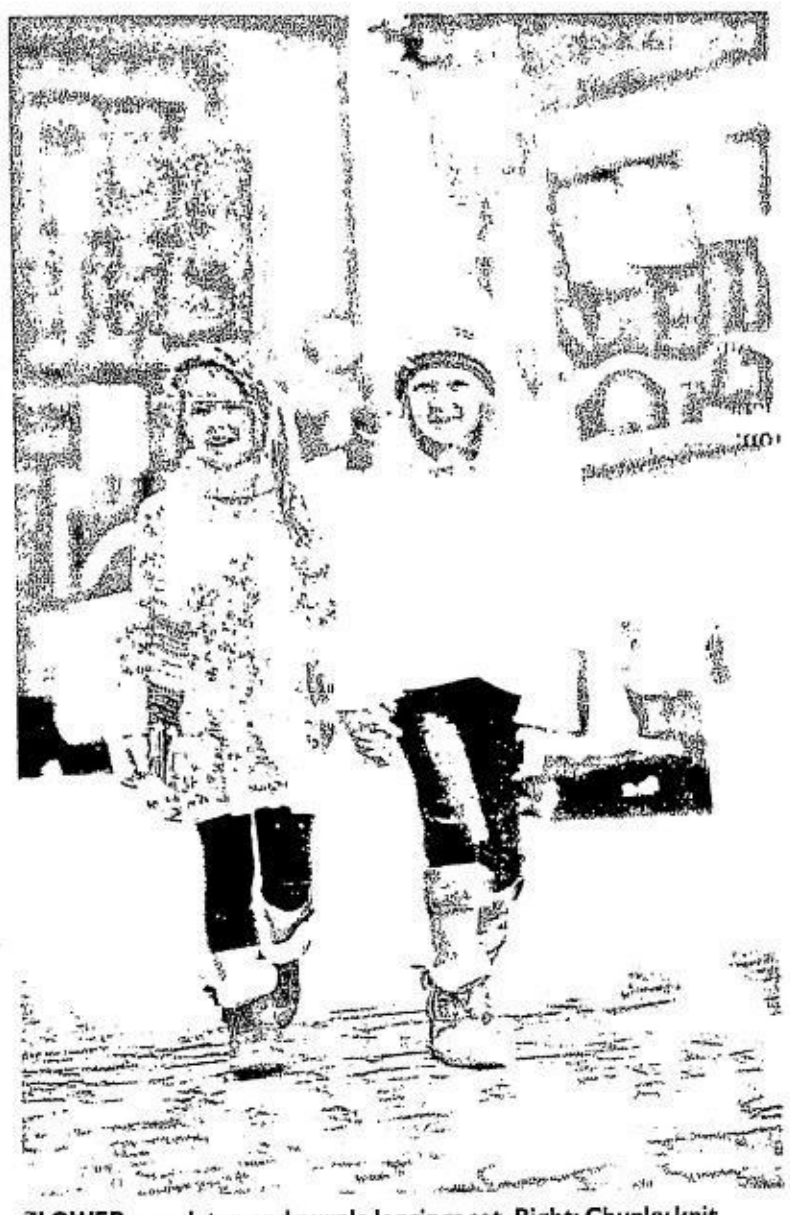
For the fall season, a must-have for little boys are chunky knit cardigans which are perfect for the holiday season's unpredictable weather.

Older girls, aged 7-16, will want the latest fashion looks and the Designers at Debenhams range offers them a wide selection.

Red Herring features skinny jeans that look great when paired with a logo T-shirt and a cropped jacket. Key patterns on clothing include monochrome stripes to epitomize beatnik chic.

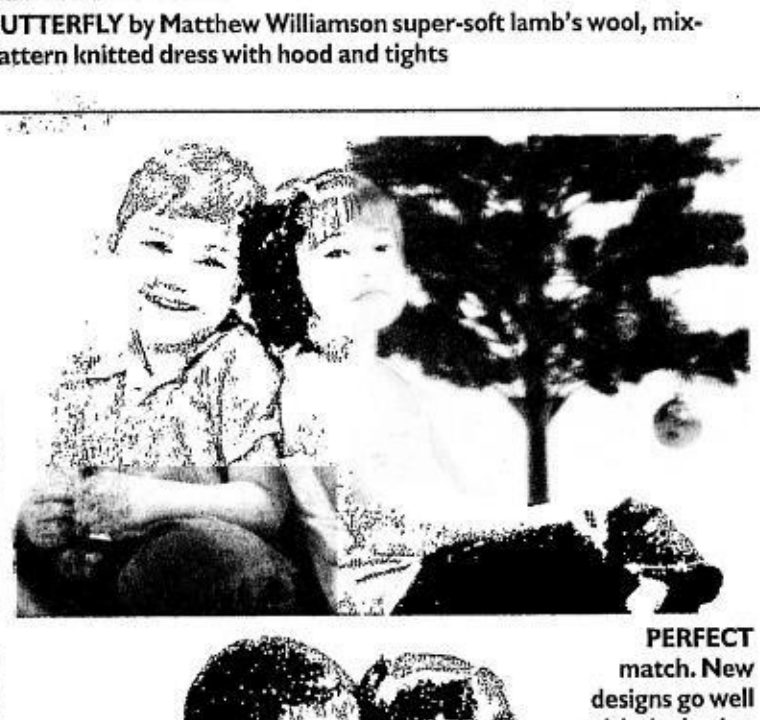
For older boys, it's all about creating an easy, relaxed look. Logo T-shirts are key and can be worn underneath smart open shirts or over a long-sleeve top. These will look great when paired with denim jeans and, of course, a rock-star attitude.

Debenhams TriNoma, located on the second level, is now open. Debenhams is also at 3/L, Shangri-La Plaza Mall and 3/L, Rustan's Makati. Call 9015650 (Trinoma); 632-9802 (Shangri-La); and 818-4775 (Rustan's Makati).



FLOWER smock top and purple leggings set. Right: Chunky knit cardigan and jeans with scarf belt. All by J Jeans by Jasper Conran

Threads for tykes



PERFECT match. New designs go well with the basics.

SHARE the joy!

THIS SEASON, KIDS WILL definitely look for Mossimo Kids outfits under the tree because it offers an array of casual separates perfect for any occasion.

Little boys can choose to pair their denims with an assortment of tops from basics to funky designs, while little girls have everything from dainty dresses to separates.

The collection has everything for the entire family, from casual basics to chic separates that incorporate a variety of textures, bold prints and deep, rich hues.

It features the hottest trends for the season including jumpers and graphic tees for the ladies, premium pants and shirts for him and an array of delightful designs for kids. These pieces can be mixed and matched to create any individual style.

The Mossimo Holiday collection is available in all Mossimo stores and leading department stores.

BRIGHT stripes make the holidays much brighter.

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Colorful, understated, versatile

BRIGHT-COLORED, VERSATILE TOPS and dresses with classic bottoms and jackets dominate the Autumn/Winter 2007 collection of Wallis.

A great addition to the Robinsons Specialty Stores Inc. which exclusively distributes Topshop, Topman, Dorothy Perkins and Warehouse here in the Philippines, Wallis was recently launched at Robinsons Galleria.

The latest Wallis Autumn/Winter '07 collection draws inspiration from the 1970s and 1980s. An emphasis on strong color and multilayering gives an understated glamorous edge to the wardrobe.

Color clashing is the trend this season, mixing and matching similar shades. The jersey 1970s dress in turquoise, fuchsia and purple is a bold way to introduce this trend. The tomato jacket with visible zips is worn with a purple knit.

Slim-fit, high-waist pencil skirts worn with pretty blouses, available in jewel colors, keep the look minimal yet stylish. Accessorize with the striking mock croc bag.

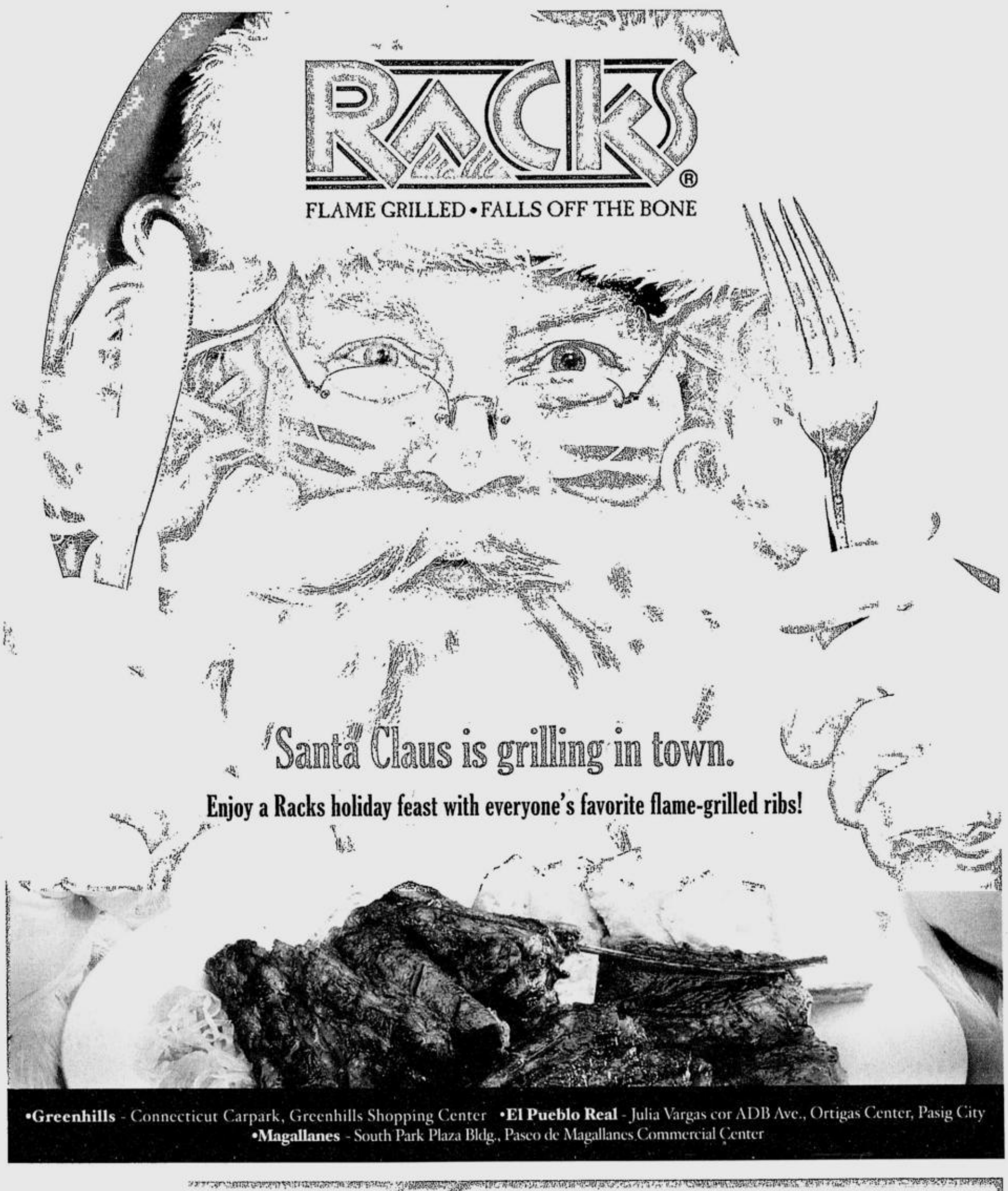
Sharp suiting and wide-leg pants give a slightly masculine edge but patent heels keep the silhouette sexy. Gray serves as a great base tone. The white shirt is an essential item, keep it chic and simple with wide-leg denim jeans or mix with this season's key knit—the tabard—and culottes to bring this staple piece up to date.

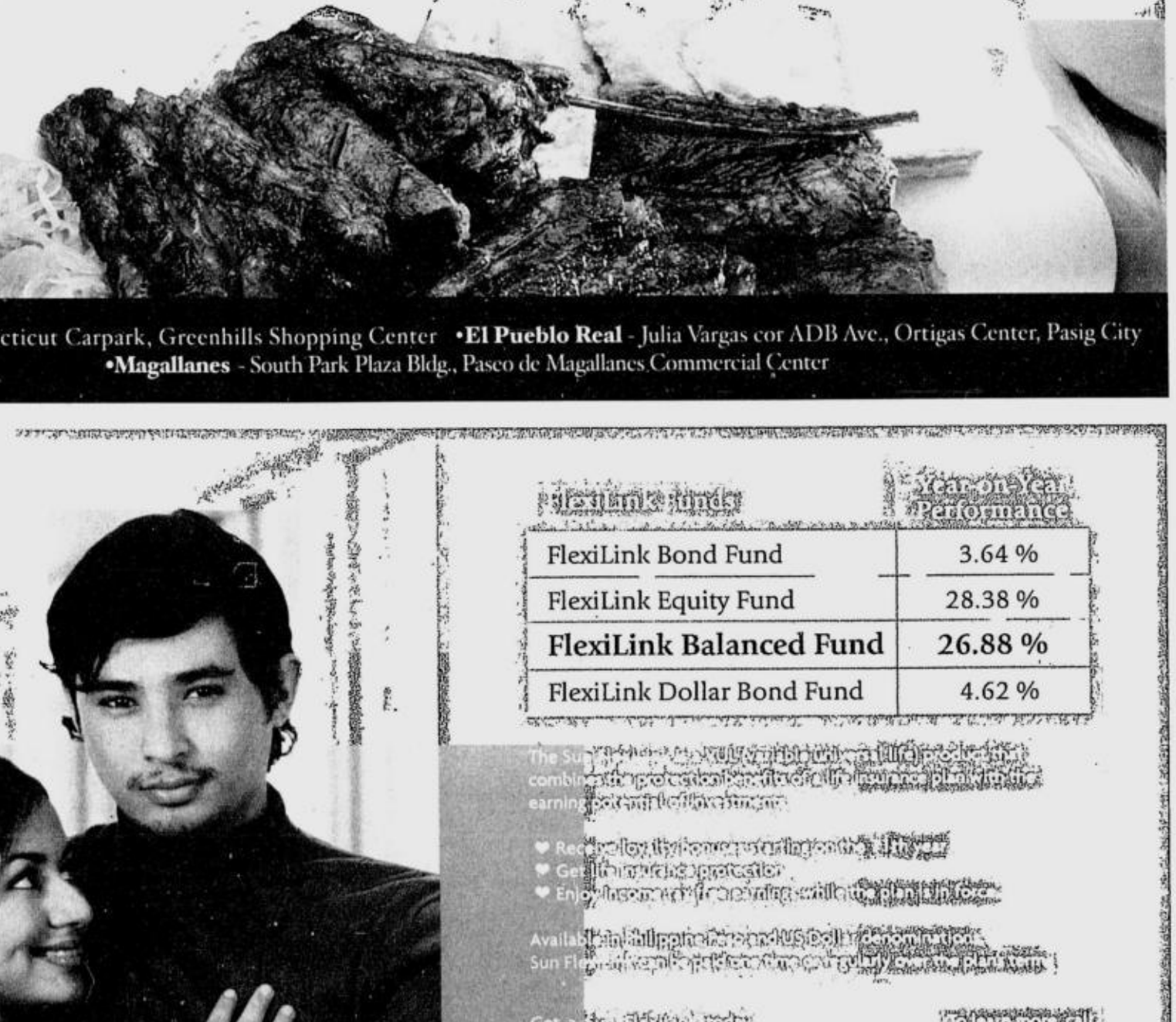
Adornment is also key this season with rouleaux trims and delicate buttons decorating blouses.

WALLIS printed ¾-sleeve V-neck blouse layered with white jersey and white straight-cut pants

PRINTED multicolor long dress

PINK shirt topped with Wallis double-breasted jacket in red and paired with a gray skirt with pleat details





GOINGS ON

Christmas play slated Dec. 19 at Ateneo Theater

THE JOHN DEWEY SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN of Quezon City is staging the play "Christmas at John Dewey School for Children" Dec. 19, 5-8 p.m., at the Ateneo Theater, Katipunan. The event is sponsored by Tutorlink, Astoria Plaza, Mariz cakes and pastries, and Mindano Nova Realty Inc. Tickets are available at P150, balcony, and P250, orchestra (9220020).

CHRISTMAS VILLAGE BAZAAR. The Yupangco Exhibits and Shows, in cooperation with Zoobic Foundation, is holding a Yule Go Wild Christmas Village Bazaar Dec. 14-16, 10 a.m.-10 p.m., at A Venue Hall (Antel) corner Makati Ave. and Gen. Luna St., Makati City. Zoobic Safari, Residence Inn and Paradizoo are giving discounts. The Yule Go Wild Christmas Village Bazaar is sponsored by Bellevue Manila, Aristocrat Phils. and Limelight Fashion (8999824 or 8983695).

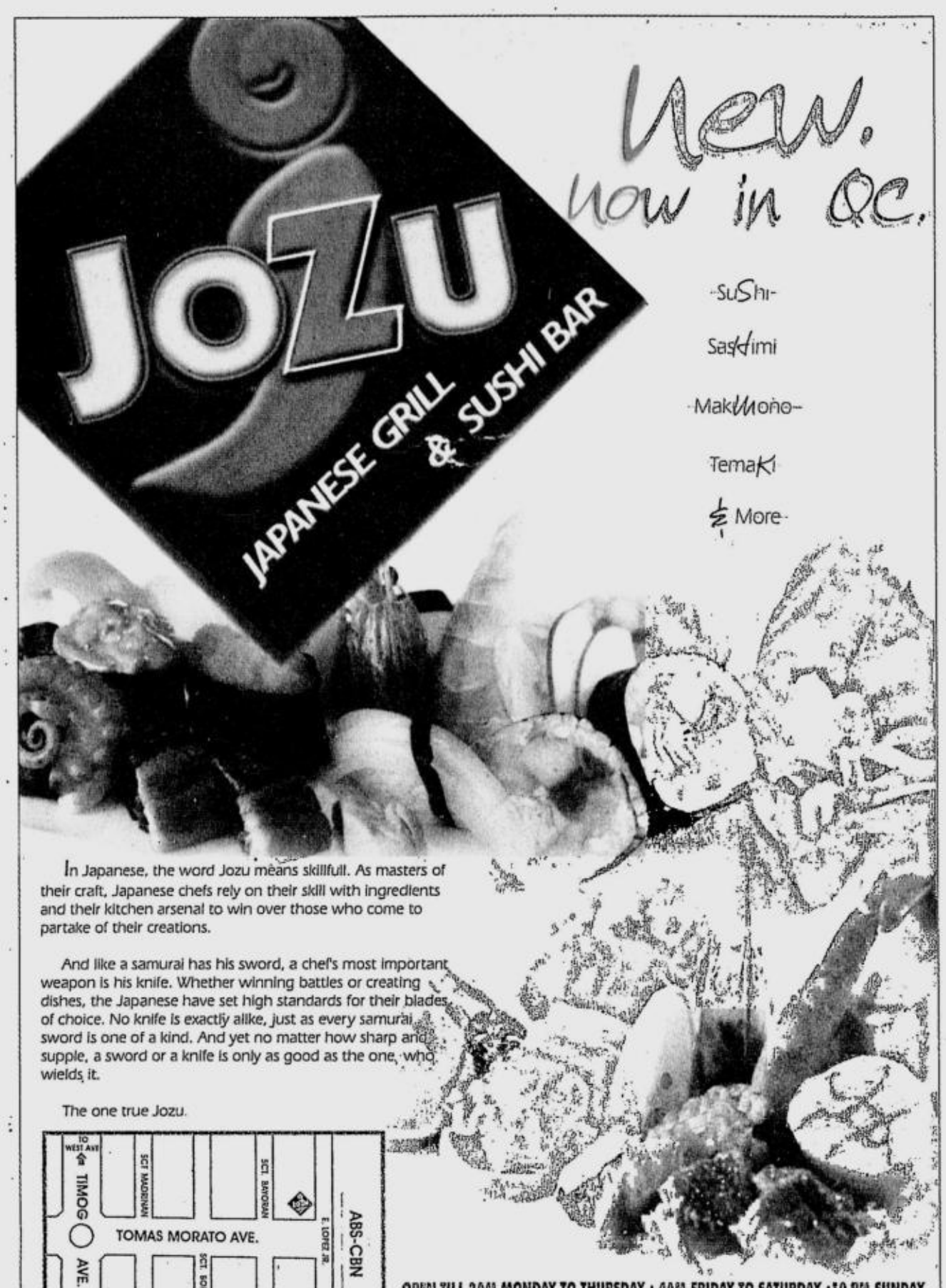
BAZAAR. GMA Kapuso Network and event organizer Cut Unlimited is holding the second part of its Seventh Noel Discovery Bazaar and Christmas Shopping Expo Dec. 21-23 at the World Trade Center, Pasay City. Beneficiaries are GMA Kapuso Foundation's Give-A-Gift Alay sa Batang Pinoy, the Bantayog ng mga Bayani Foundation and the Associate Missionaries of Assumption Foundation. Live performances from the Center for Pop, a fashion show by Abbylyn and a cooking demo by MCN Taipan will be featured. Noel Bazaar is presented by GMA Network, the Philippine Daily Inquirer and Southeast Asian Airlines, in cooperation with Sunday Inquirer Magazine, the Foreign Post, Barangay LS 97.1 FM, Jam 88.3, Wave 89.1 and Max 103.5.

DANCE SHOWDOWN. Sun Cellular will hold the grand finals of the street dance competition Sun Dance Showdown today, 3 p.m., at the Activity Area of Robinsons Place Ermita. Finalists are Rondon High School; Ramon Magsaysay, Cubao; FEU High School, Kapitolyo High School, Quezon City Science High School, La Consolacion Pasig, Arellano University Pasig, Arellano University Mandaluyong, Commonwealth High School and Rizal High School. First prize is P50,000, a computer showcase for the school, a certificate of recognition and gift items from Sun Cellular. Second and third prizes are P25,000 and P15,000, respectively, plus certificates of recognition and gift items from Sun.

HOLIDAY TREATS. Starmall Edsa, Starmall Las Piñas and Metropolis Star Alabang spread the holiday cheer by offering different treats. Starmall Edsa (7244992) holds a caroling contest among groups of children age 12 and below. Simbang Gabi will be held Dec. 15-23, 7 p.m., at the Activity Area. Santa Claus will visit Starmall Edsa Dec. 16, 22 and 25. Starmall Las Piñas (8725249) will present "Perfect Rhythm Christmas Recital." Santa Claus will be at Finds Supermarket Dec. 15.

Metropolis Star Alabang holds on Dec. 14 Power Job Fair at the 2/L Activity Center. Grand finals of Star Extreme Hip Hop will be held Dec. 16, while San Miguel Beer is holding Paskong Samahang Walang Katulad today.

SEMINAR. The Ontario Center for Skills and Livelihood will hold "Trendy Balloon Making," Dec. 16 at the Training Hall of University of the Philippines Institute of Small Scale Industry, Virata Hall, Jacinto St., cor. University Ave., UP Campus, Diliman, QC. Call 4746059 or 0920-3981677 for details.



In Japanese, the word Jozu means skillfull. As masters of their craft, Japanese chefs rely on their skill with ingredients and their kitchen arsenal to win over those who come to partake of their creations.

And like a samurai has his sword, a chef's most important weapon is his knife. Whether winning battles or creating dishes, the Japanese have set high standards for their blades of choice. No knife is exactly alike, just as every samurai sword is one of a kind. And yet no matter how sharp and supple, a sword or a knife is only as good as the one who wields it.

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THE 14TH Huwarang Pilipino Annual Awards 2007 was held recently at Occupational Safety Health Center, North Edsa, Diliman, QC. Professor Josephine Lampas, Kabalikat awardee, receives a trophy from Dr. Rod Malunhao and professor Eugenia "Gene" Panganiban.

Learn how to effectively manage organizational change.

Successful Change Management Workshop

Managing Organizational Change
Facilitated by Dr. Agnes Sarthou, Ph.D.

December 18 - 19, 2007
9:00AM – 5:00PM
Legaspi Room, Intercontinental Manila

* Discover basic concepts and principles of managing organization change.
* Find out how to develop a "Change Intervention Plan" for your organization.
* Learn organizational methodologies & techniques to promote proactive planning change.

RAVE REVIEWS!

"Very productive two-day learning!"
- Maria Alma Nimfa Sayas Edan, Janssen Pharmaceutica

"The seminar provided a mix of professionals from different business backgrounds. **Good learning environment!**"
- Alvin B. Pascual, Smart Communications, Inc.

"This is my first time to attend this session. So far, everything discussed is **new** and has been **very helpful!**"
- Gregorio P. Catapang, North Luzon Command (NOLCOM)

AGNES "AGGIE" SARTHOU, PH.D.
Dr. Sarthou brings with her a wealth of corporate and training experience on disciplines of management, organization visioning, strategic planning as well as skills on leadership, communication, people handling and values. For over twenty years of training and consultancy experience with dozens of multinational clients, she continues to receive encores in her training programs.

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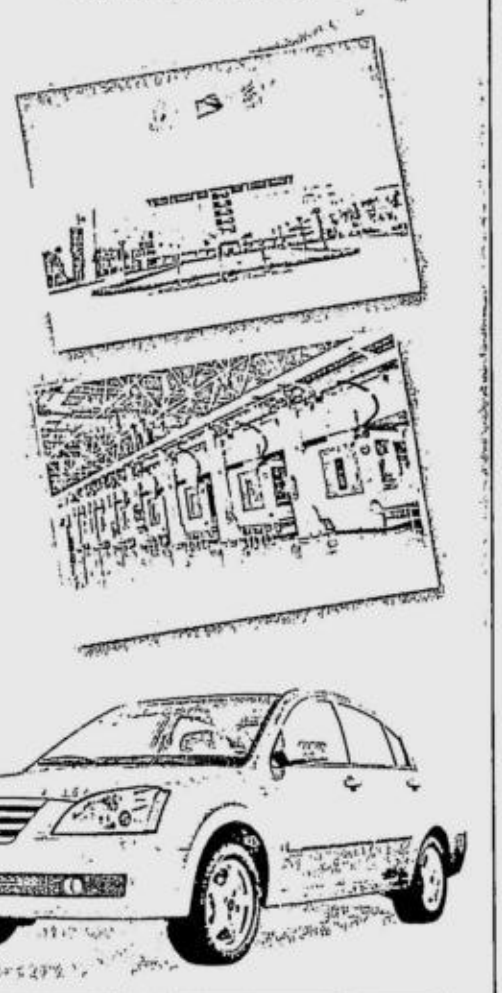
EFFICIENCY NEED NOT BE EXPENSIVE!

CHERY

Chery Automobile Co., Ltd. was founded by five Anhui's local state-owned investment companies with a registered capital of RMB 1.752 billion in 1997, the construction of which commenced on March 18, 1997. In 2006, it accomplished a sales volume of 305,200, an increase of 62% over the same period of the previous year, and had a share of 7.2% of the Chinese car market, ranking 4th in the Chinese passenger car industry, thus showing its great strength in marching into the first camp of the Chinese car industry having been long monopolized by Chinese-foreign jointly-funded brands and taking a commanding lead among independently managed car enterprises.

Chery now owns a full set of manufacturing and R & D systems, including two car plants, two engine plants, a gearbox plant, an automobile engineering research institute and an automobile planning and design institute. It has so far a total staff of 23,000, total assets of RMB over 22 billion and an annual production capacity of 650,000 complete vehicles, 400,000 engines and 300,000 sets of gearboxes. Its current products includes six series here in the Philippines (Eastar, Cowin, Tiggo, A5, V5, QQ) of complete vehicles and their auxiliary engines, gearboxes and key parts and components. By the end of this year, Chery will become one of the passenger car manufacturers offering most varieties of products and most complete product series to the market in the Philippines.



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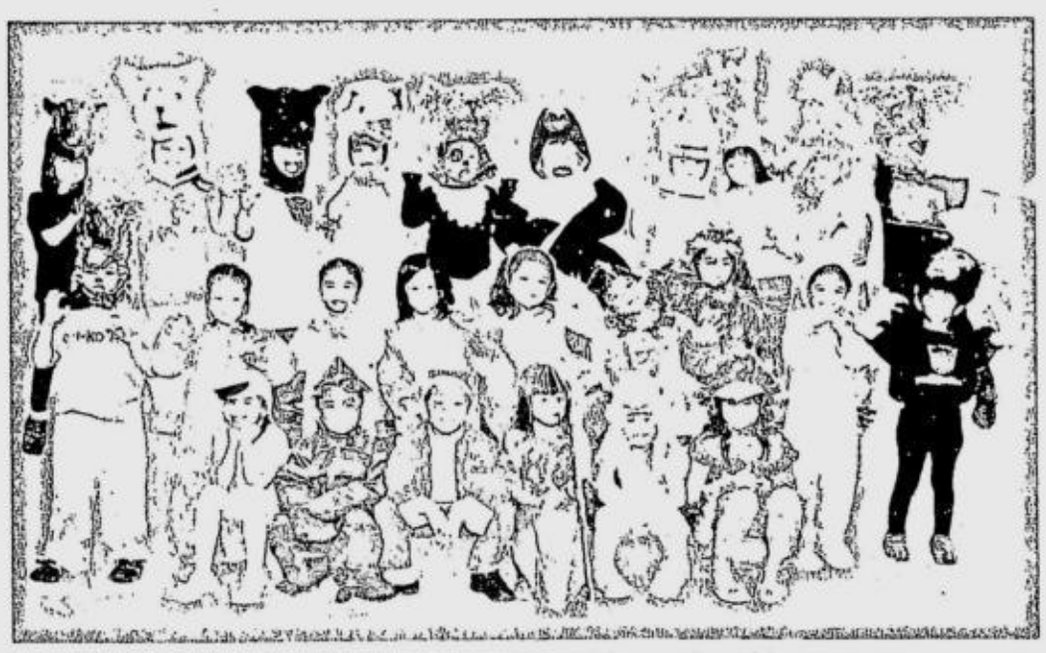
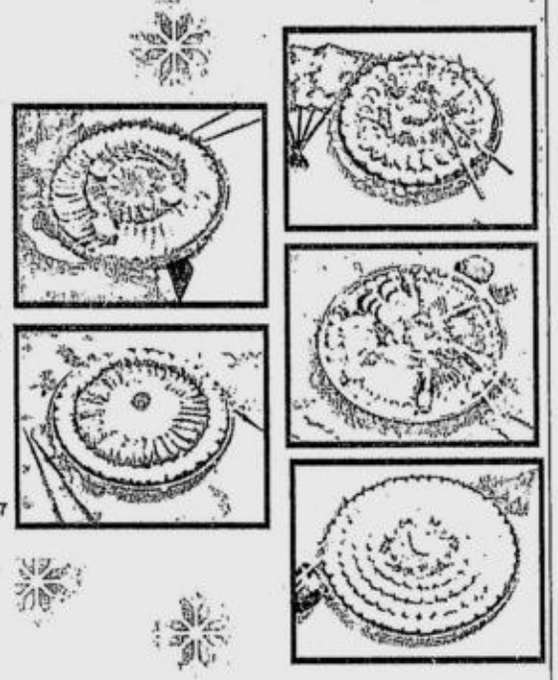


CELEBRATE Christmas at John Dewey School for Children on Dec. 19.

Cold Storage

寿司 Sushi 刺身 Sashimi

Celebrate the season with joyful giving and merry-making...



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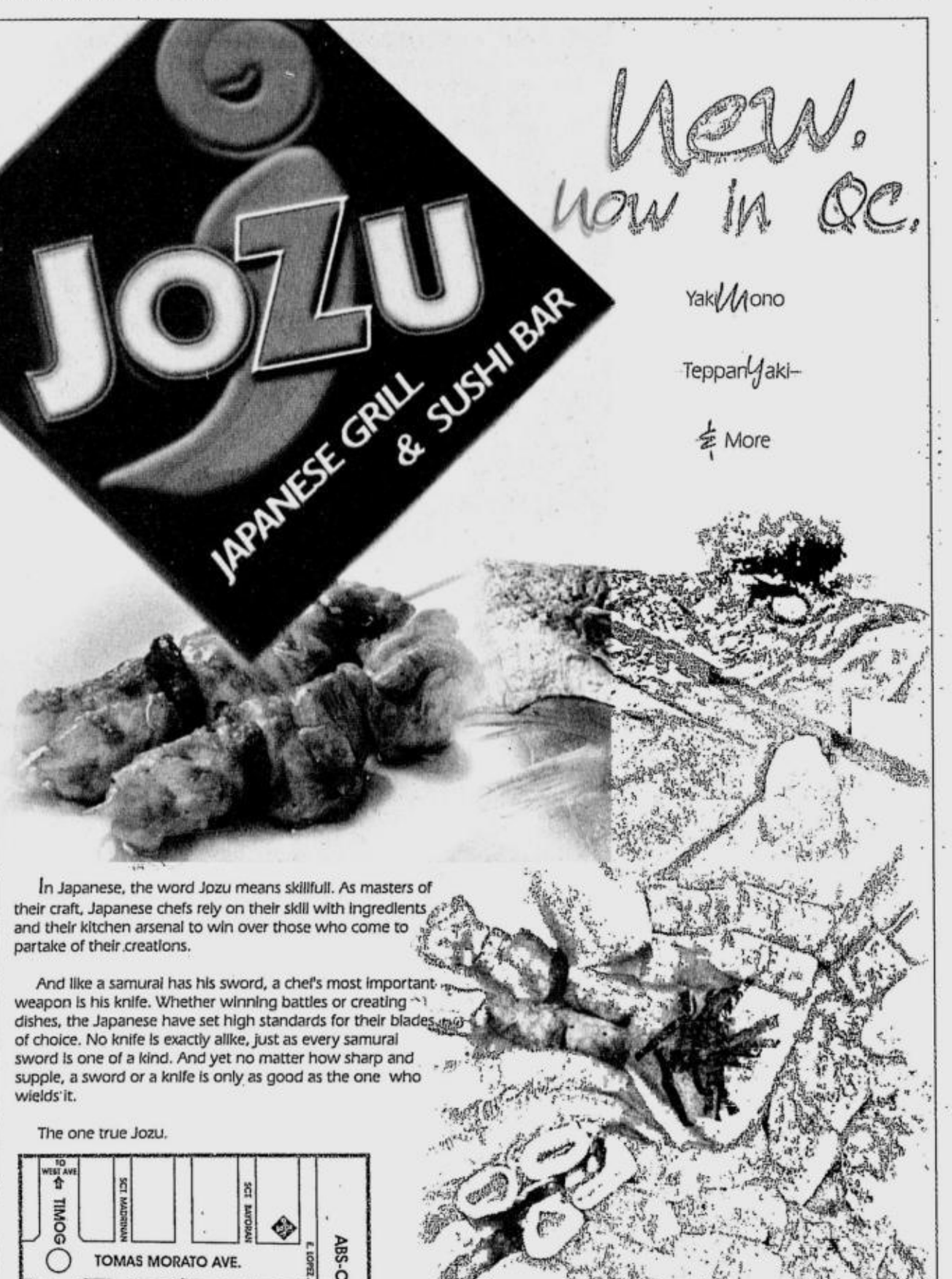
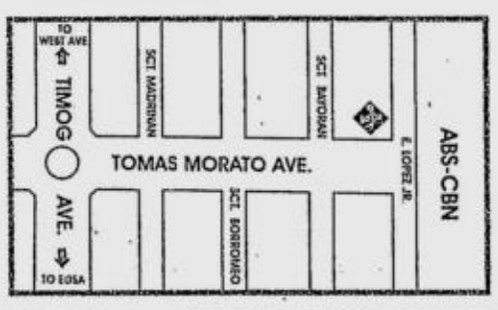


In Japanese, the word Jozu means skillfull. As masters of their craft, Japanese chefs rely on their skill with ingredients and their kitchen arsenal to win over those who come to partake of their creations.

And like a samurai has his sword, a chef's most important weapon is his knife. Whether winning battles or creating dishes, the Japanese have set high standards for their blades of choice. No knife is exactly alike, just as every samurai sword is one of a kind. And yet no matter how sharp and supple, a sword or a knife is only as good as the one who wields it.

The one true Jozu.



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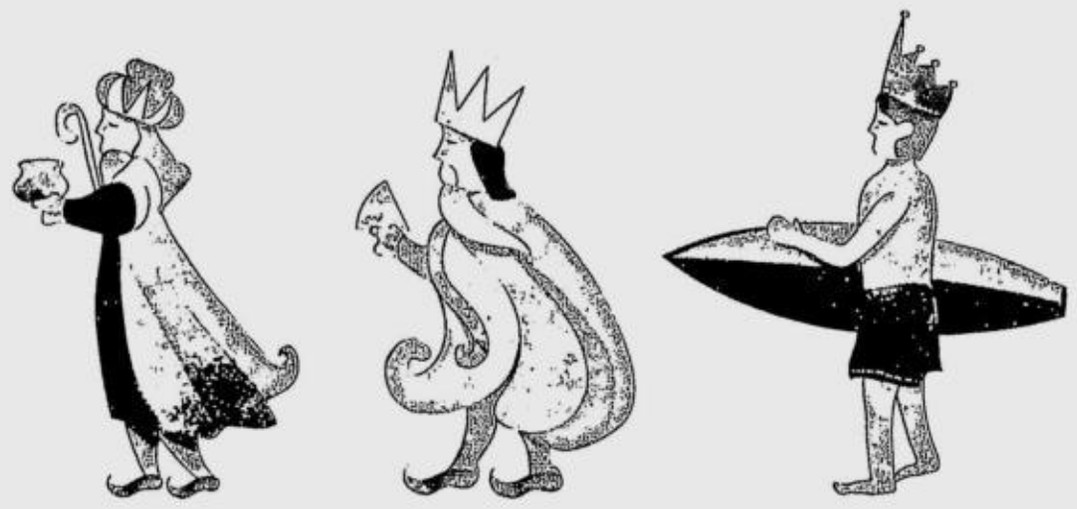


Book a 3 night stay and use the 3rd night within 3 months.

Discovery Suites introduces the Christmas Three Package. For only P8,888++ for a Junior Suite or P9,999++ for a One-Bedroom Suite, you get 2 luxury filled nights over the Yuletide and an option to use the 3rd night within 3 months. Package includes complimentary breakfast for 2, a welcome gift, unlimited access to the Balance Lifestyle & Fitness Club, and more. Offer valid from December 8 - 30, 2007 and January 1-12, 2008.

For room reservations call (63 2) 683.8396, 683.8369 or e-mail rsvn@discovery.com.ph. For table reservations, call (63 2)683.8222 local 3336, 3855 or 3722.

DANCE FEVER!

New Year's Eve Countdown Party featuring The Real Groove. Dance the night away with dance hits from the 60s, 70s, 80s and today.
December 31, 2007 Serendipity Lounge 9pm
P1,500 net per person

NEW YEAR'S EVE GALA DINNER

Lavish international buffet with a panoramic view of the Ortigas skyline.
December 31, 2007
Columbus Function Room 7pm
P850++ per person

HOLIDAY MENU AT THE STEAKHOUSE

Savory menu selections featuring prime US-grade Angus steak with a complimentary glass of sparkling wine.
The Steakhouse at Serendipity Lounge.
Available for lunch on December 25, 2007, and for lunch and dinner on January 1, 2008.
P1,295++

DISCOVERY Suites

ON VICTOR: 1/3-sleeve light-blue solid woven shirt with printed raw-edge appliqué detail and patch pocket; five-pocket Revolt fit raw denim with detailed stitching design. **On Nikki:** Contrast-stitching black pea coat with self-fabric belt and welt pocket; brown shorts with wide roll-up cuff detail

Animé holidays

LET THE INTENSE JEWEL colors, exotic swirls and Asian-chic graphics of Penshoppe's newest collection infuse fun into your holiday fashion.

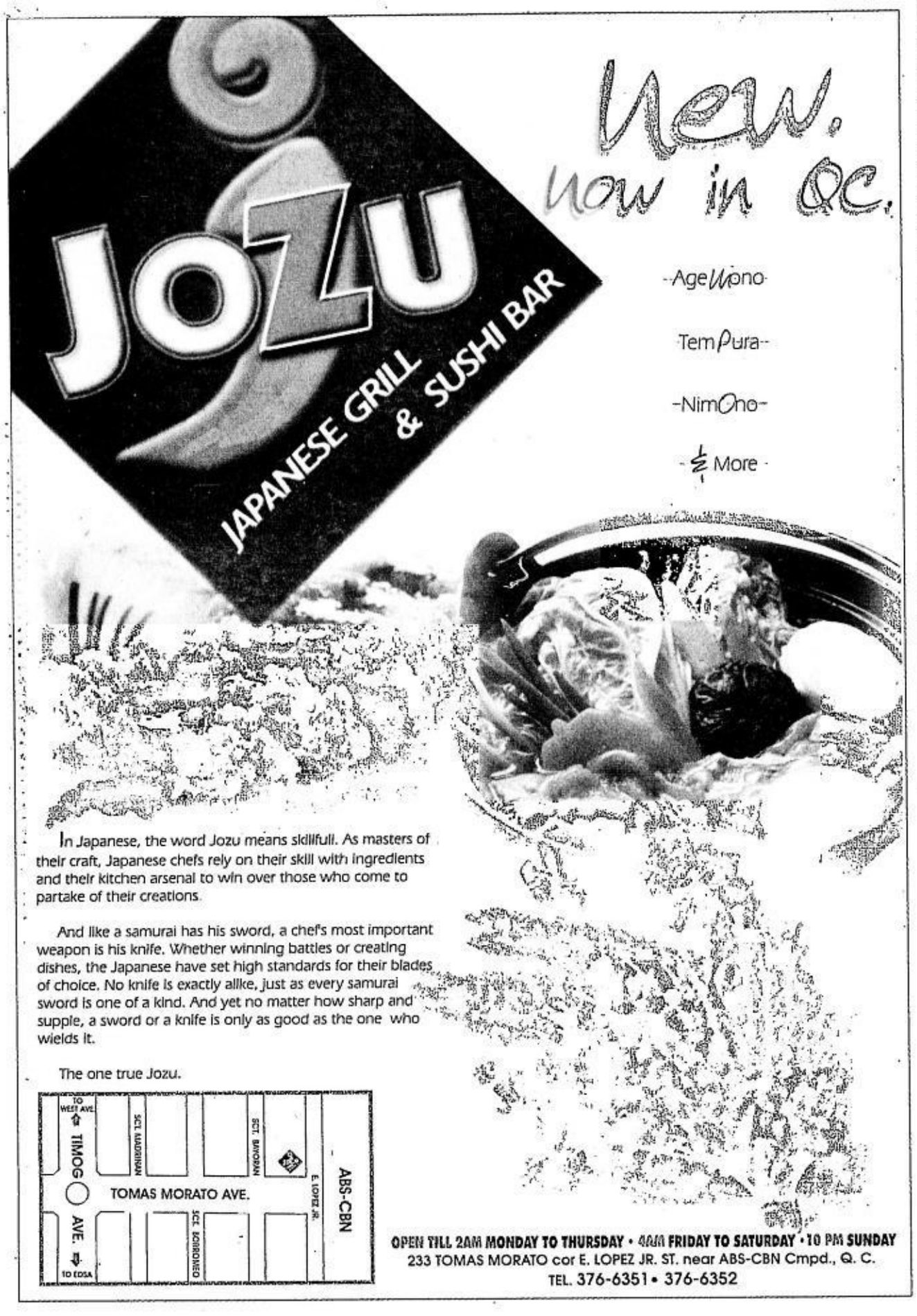
Penshoppe's Retro-Oriental collection fuses the colorful quirkiness of ahimé, the timeless appeal of the Orient and the rebellious spirit of punk to make the hippest wear for the Yuletide.

Guys can dress to impress in casual tops splashed with cool, Oriental-inspired graphics such as dragons, Chinese calligraphy and Japanese kabuki masks. Dressed up with military details for an added edge, these go perfectly with Penshoppe's skinny jeans and raw denims. Hooded jackets and cardigans are made to match.

For girls, pretty vintage and retro influences from previous seasons continue, but this time with an Oriental twist. Asian-inspired florals and graphics adorn tops that come in dazzling jewel colors. Hooded tees with delicate cherry blossom prints are street-smart and girly.

Visit www.penshoppe.com.

ONE-THIRD-SLEEVE white solid woven shirt with black cord piping matched with black tapered vest; black Revolt fit pants with light-gray piping on both sides



CATEGORY manager for Wella Philippines Alex Pepino and managing director for Wella Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand Michael Schulz

PIANDRE Salon's mother-daughter tandem Linda Francisco and Andrea Zulueta

A colorful preview of 2008 hair trends

MOI WAS COMPLETELY amazed by the fabulously vibrant colors and the beauty everywhere as Wella Professionals, "the world-renowned hair color brand," proudly launched the cream hair colorant Koleston Perfect.

What seems to be a favorite venue for various events, the Ayala Museum, was the perfect backdrop, as beauty was revered as an art that evening, *palanggas*.

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by **Alex Van Hagen** using **Kodak** EasyShare system

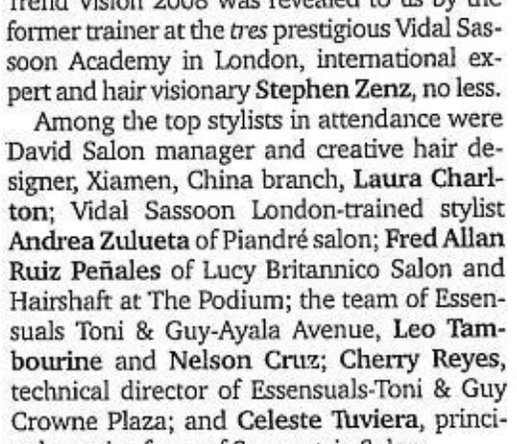
Bursts of wild color in the expressionist works by rising visual artist **Sunny Garcia** filled the walls, giving life to the museum's foyer.

To get this fab happening rolling, we were given a preview of hair trends for 2008. The Trend Vision 2008 was revealed to us by the former trainer at the *tres* prestigious Vidal Sassoon Academy in London, international expert and hair visionary **Stephen Zenz**, no less.

Among the top stylists in attendance were David Salon manager and creative hair designer, Xiamen, China branch, **Laura Charlton**; Vidal Sassoon London-trained stylist **Andrea Zulueta** of Piandré salon; **Fred Allan Ruiz Peñales** of Lucy Britannico Salon and Hairshaft at The Podium; the team of Essensuals Toni & Guy-Ayala Avenue, **Leo Tambourine** and **Nelson Cruz**; **Cherry Reyes**, technical director of Essensuals-Toni & Guy Crowne Plaza; and **Celeste Tuviera**, principal creative force of Symmetria Salon.

Director for Wella Philippines, Indonesia

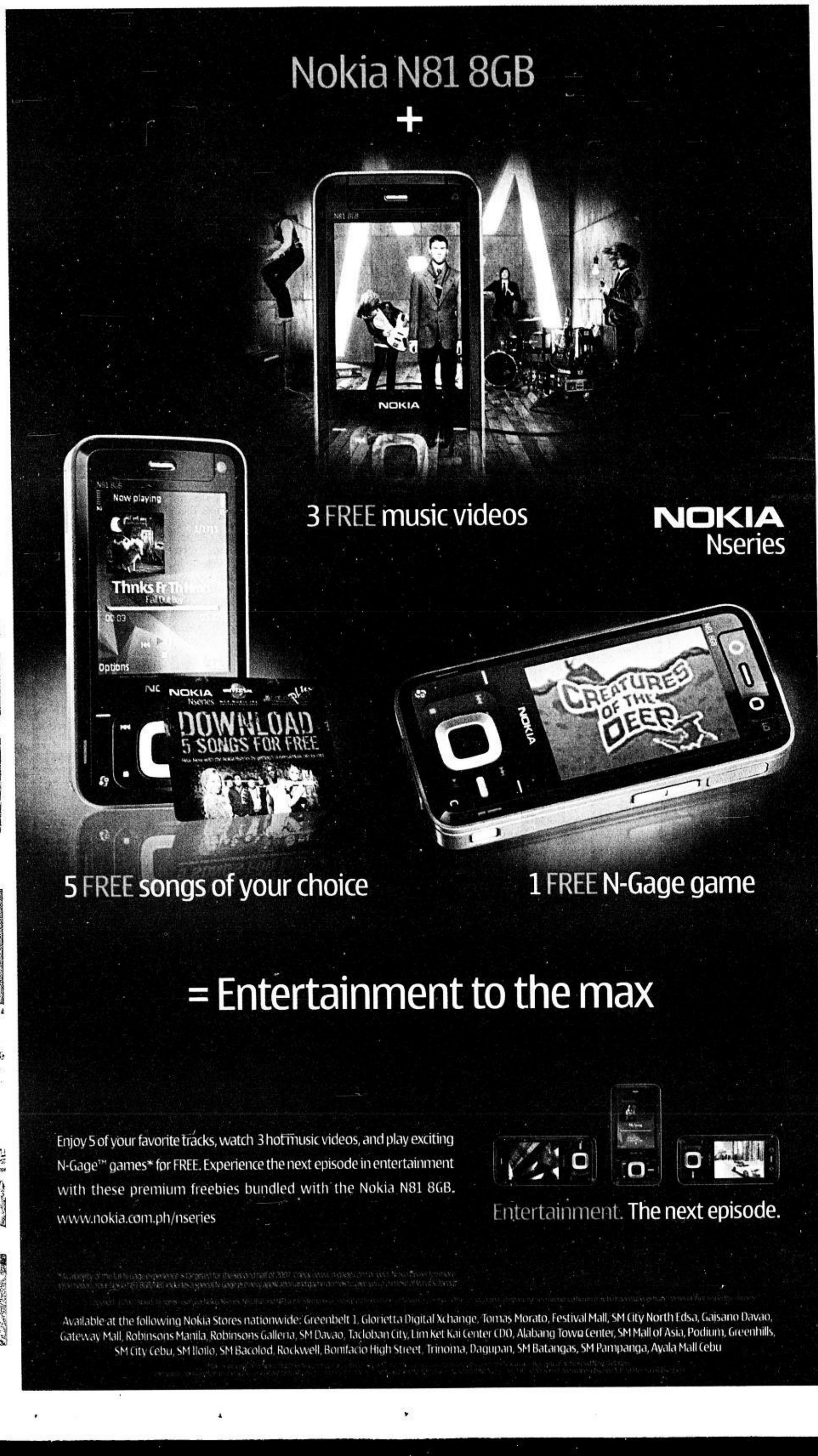
A COLORFUL/ J3



CELESTE Tuviera of Symetria Salon (center) showcasing the Koleston Perfect Special Mix range by Wella

FRED Peñales of Hairshaft /Britannico with his Koleston Perfect Deep Browns color creations

DAVID'S Salon Xiamen China branch salon manager and creative hair designer Laura Charlton (right)



A diario novela by CARLO J. CAPARAS

To have and to hold

Art: ARNEL A. AVETRIA

A. LIPIN — BY JESS ABRERA

PUGAD BABOY — BY P.M. JUNIOR

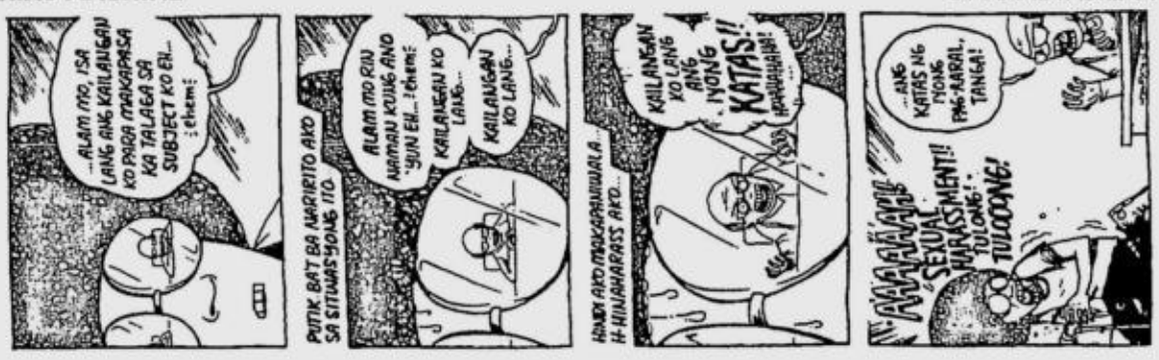
GARFIELD — BY JIM DAVIS

BABY BLUES — BY JERRY SCOTT

ATOMO AND WEBOY — BY LYRA GARCELLANO

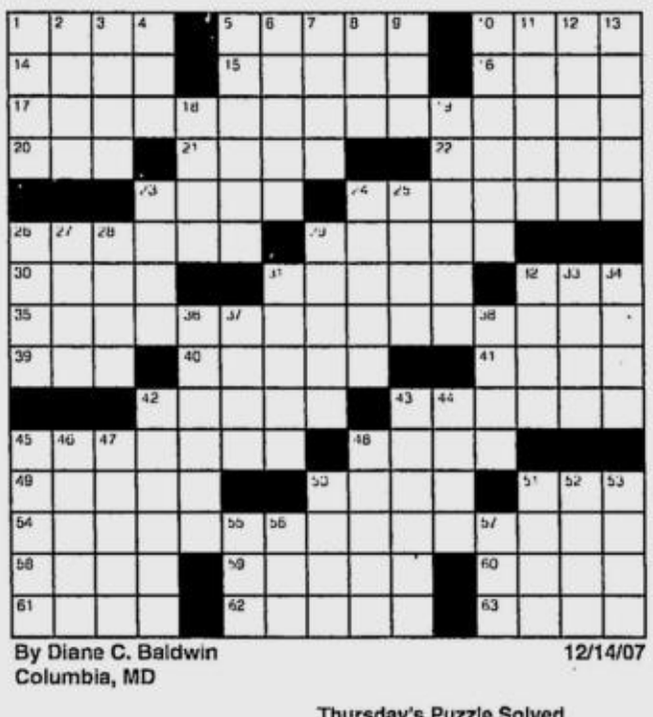
LOVEKNOTS — BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

KIKO MACHINE — BY MANIX ABRERA



BEN — BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Diane C. Baldwin
Columbia, MD

12/14/07

ACROSS
1 Electronic journal
5 Grapevine support
10 Pretentiously creative
14 Exercise discipline
15 Pass along
16 Pineapple center
17 Was brutally honest
20 Supplement, with out
21 Harvest grain
22 Sister's daughter
23 Groucho or Harpo
24 Accompanies
26 Rebellion at sea
29 Joyous hymn
30 Press
31 Pigeonholes
32 Hot shot
35 Presented one's case
39 Building add-on
40 No-brainer
41 Curved paths
42 Military blockade
43 Forewarning
45 Salesmen's spiels
48 Bluefin or yellowfin
49 Pseudonym
50 Kissable girl?
51 Professional charge
54 Came right to the point
58 Bassoon accessory
59 Reserves in advance
60 Profound
61 Wraps up
62 Restless
63 Avoid reality

DOWN
1 Eight bits unit
2 Facial expression
3 Goggle at
4 Meander
5 Circulation conduit
6 Take five
7 Radar image
8 Acorn dropper
9 Salinger grain
10 Procrastinator's lack
11 Crew member
12 Leaflet handout
13 Favorable responses
18 Persia, today
19 If there is a need
23 Take offense
24 Solid ground
25 Adam's third
26 Track meet distance
27 Asian range
28 Hard work
29 __ de Leon
31 Chorus numbers
32 Electricity line
33 Old Peruvian
34 Gusto
36 Most frigid
37 Stadium level
38 Molten flow
42 Groups of trees
43 Mawkish
44 In a fresh way
45 Army chaplain
46 Green card holder
47 Befell
48 Carpet anchors
50 Windsor, e.g.
51 Gratis
52 Utopian spot
53 Lay eyes on
55 Wharton School deg.
56 Charged atom
57 Peculiar

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

M	A	E	■	P	A	P	A	L	■	P	A	I	N	E
U	R	N	■	E	A	R	L	Y	■	E	R	R	E	D
S	R	S	■	T	H	E	B	E	S	T	T	I	M	E
C	O	N	T	E	S	T	■	■	O	R	I	S	O	N
A	Y	A	H	■	■	A	S	I	D	E	S	■	■	■
T	O	R	E	L	A	X	I	S	■	L	A	M	P	S
■	■	L	E	A	S	■	G	A	S	■	N	E	A	T
C	S	I	■	W	H	E	N	Y	O	U	■	N	Y	E
A	U	N	T	■	Y	D	S	■	S	L	A	T	■	■
B	E	G	A	T	■	D	O	N	O	T	H	A	V	E
■	■	■	U	R	B	A	N	E	■	■	A	L	A	R
E	D	I	T	O	R	■	■	A	L	A	B	A	M	A
T	I	M	E	T	O	R	E	L	A	X	■	G	P	S
C	L	A	S	H	■	P	R	O	N	E	■	E	E	E
H	I	N	T	S	■	M	E	N	D	S	■	S	D	S

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12/14/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're highly original. Not only do you think outside of the box, you live outside of the box! In your daring way, you often provoke others—and you love it. Privately, you're serious and philosophical. You'll do anything on a dare. In the year ahead, you will wrap up something you've been involved with for the past nine years.

Birthdate of: Patty Duke, actress; Michael Owen, British soccer star; Dee Wallace-Stone, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Continue to look for opportunities to expand your experience of the world and life in general. Sign up for a course. Travel someplace new. Learn whatever you can.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Work to settle accounts and pay your bills. Return borrowed items. Take care of loose details about insurance matters, wills, estates, taxes and debt. Just do it.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Conversations with partners and close friends are particularly important now. Not only that, if you observe yourself when interacting with others, you can learn more about your style of communicating.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): The placement of the Sun right now gives you a lot of inspiration and energy to work hard to get better organized. Obviously, this is a good chance to clean up your act!

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Love, romance, parties, sports, fun occasions, vacations and artistic activities are your main focus now. Enjoy playful times with children as well.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Home, family and real estate are favored at this time. This is where you are focused. Talk to family members. Invite them over for food and drink. (A good time is had by all.)

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): It's a busy time, with short trips, errands, conversations with everyone and extra time spent with relatives and siblings. Don't stay at home. Keep on the move!

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Money, earnings, possessions and investments are your primary concern. But the big question is: Why is there always so much month left at the end of the money?

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Right now, you're royalty. The Sun is in your sign, drawing people and favorable situations to you. Make the most of this. Milk it for all it's worth.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Work alone or behind the scenes if you can at this time. You need some downtime to be by yourself and figure out what you want in the new year ahead.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): It's a popular time for you. Enjoy the company of others. Work or play with groups. Talk to others about your future goals.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Expect to be noticed more than usual right now for some reason. Bosses, parents and VIPs are impressed with you. Take a bow!

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU

Conceptis SudoKu — By Dave Green

	4	7	1			9	6	
		3		6		1		
			7	9	2		5	
		9				7		
	3		8	1	6			
		1		2		3		
	5	4			8	6	7	

Difficulty Level ★★★★

12/14

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

5	2	6	7	3	1	9	8	4
9	7	1	8	4	6	2	5	3
3	4	8	5	9	2	7	6	1
6	1	5	2	8	9	4	3	7
4	8	9	6	7	3	5	1	2
2	3	7	1	5	4	8	9	6
1	9	4	3	2	5	6	7	8
8	6	2	9	1	7	3	4	5
7	5	3	4	6	8	1	2	9

Difficulty Level ★★★

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12/13

TATLER editor in chief Anton San Diego, publisher Irene Martel Francisco and *moi*

ABE and Nini Licaros with Andreas Biehler

SALA and People Palace's Colin Mackay

LAWYER Frank Chavez with emcee of the evening Johnny Litton and architect Chito Antonio

SUZETTE Morelos and John Lesaca

A colorful preview of 2008 hair trends

From page J1

and Thailand **Michael Schulz**, who flew in especially for this grand occasion, raved about the highly talented Filipino hair stylists.

"We at Wella will continue to support Filipino professional hairdressers. We share in your mission to become the best and be as creatively fulfilled as you can possibly be," he said, *palanggas*.

New gastronomic heights

It had to be Möet-Hennessy, the leading ultra premium wines and spirits company in the world, to bring Cosmo *Manille*'s elite audience to new heights with its *tres* chic Veuve Clicquot Vintage Dinner at Makati Shangri-La's upscale Red Restaurant, dahlings.

The exclusive gathering of mega business namedroppables was hosted by *tres charmant* and *tres* handsome **Bruno Yvon**, regional marketing director of Veuve Clicquot, no less.

Bruno demonstrated how Veuve Clicquot champagnes could be served throughout an elegant sit-down dinner, starting with the signature yellow label serving for cocktails.

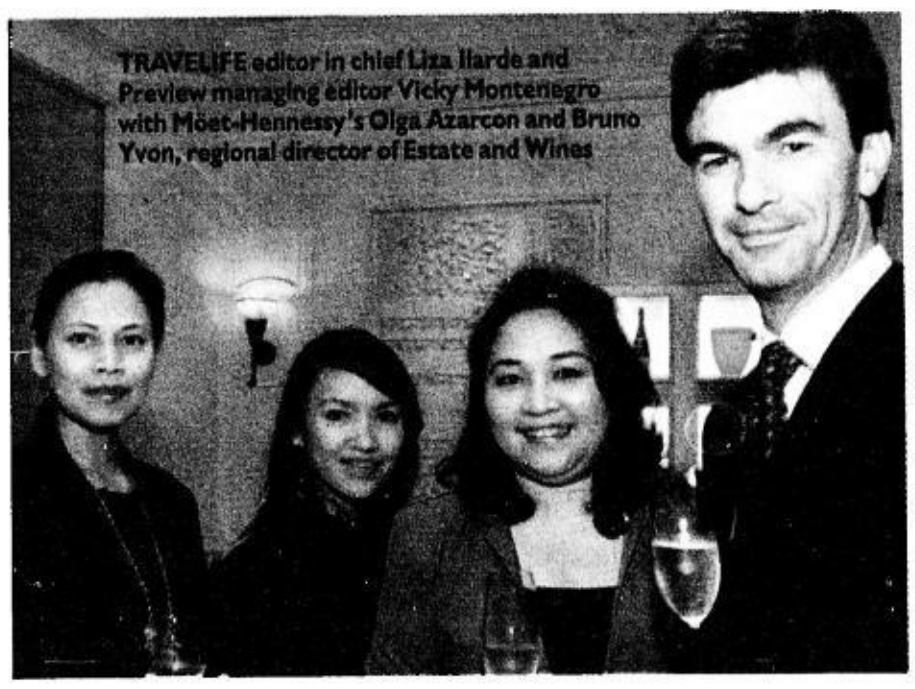
Veuve Clicquot Vintage Rich 1999 delightfully complemented the superb pan-fried *foie gras* with fig and sauternes jelly, followed by an equally sumptuous medallion of fresh Palawan lobsters in crustacean foam and the dry Veuve Clicquot Reserve 1999, *palanggas*.

The gastronomic delight was followed by the crepinette of French pigeon with cinnamon ravioli and ginger *beurre blanc* that heralded the entry of the to-die-for Veuve Clicquot Vintage Rose 2002.

The superb dinner concluded with the calorific, yummy desserts of tarte tatin but using mangoes, mousse and sherbet accompanied by Veuve Clicquot Rich 99.

The excellent and elegant dinner was brilliantly conceptualized by Möet-Hennessy chief representative **Olga Azarcon**, no less, and the business development manager, cybersmart **Randy Uson**, in partnership with **Christian Sack**, executive assistant manager; and **Ruediger Lurz**, chef de cuisine of Makati Shangri-La Hotel.

Gastronomic dreams are made of this, *palanggas*.


TRAVELIFE editor in chief Liza Ilarde and Preview managing editor Vicky Montenegro with Möet-Hennessy's Olga Azarcon and Bruno Yvon, regional director of Estate and Wines

Fashionable 2-year-old

Gotham is one of fashionable *Manille*'s best kept secrets, dahlings, especially when it comes to trendy American brands.

The quaint boutique marked its second successful year and the launch of its newest brand of chic bags and accessories, Charm and Luck, with a fun cocktail happening for all its valued clients and pals.

The double celebration was held in front of Gotham in Harrison Plaza. The area was cordoned off to accommodate the crowd, *palanggas*.

The divine hors d'oeuvres were superbly prepared by Chives, the catering service of young chef **Sansan Clemente** and business partner **Tanya Chua**. Guests were served European fare that included Spinach and Feta Filo, Shrimp Salad Crostini, Focaccia Margherita, Chicken Caesar Paninis and assorted fruit tarts all washed down by an endless supply of prosecco and rose wine.

Gift bags were given away by European cosmetic superstore Marionnaud to the delight of the chic set.

Missing the event was the New York-based owner, young and brilliant **Antonia Martel**, who is currently busy as a bee designing her very own line of casual wear. On hand to welcome guests was Gotham's general manager, a miss with the four B's, **Chinkee Clemente**.

Holding court in the cocktail area were **Benny** and **Ophie Clemente** of Belco Marketing, Inc. with **Don** and **Norma Sanders**, **Hue Ling Uyliapco**, **Gretchen Chenglay**, pretty **Rianna Llamas**, **Edwin Padilla**, Harrison Plaza's **Norma Cruz**, and **Ofie Pacheco**, plus other fashion-conscious personalities, *palanggas*.

Check out Gotham at the ground floor of Harrison Plaza, Adriatico Street, Malate, Manila. For inquiries on available brands and new arrivals, do call 5222164.

LEAH Palana and Ish Sison

MÖET-HENNESSY business development manager Randy Uson and Lifestyle Asia editor in chief Anna Sobrepeña

MARILOU Prieto Lovina with Princess Disini

CHIVES' Sansan Clemente

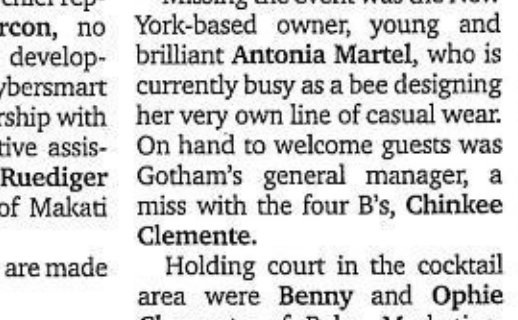
VINCENT Ticzon

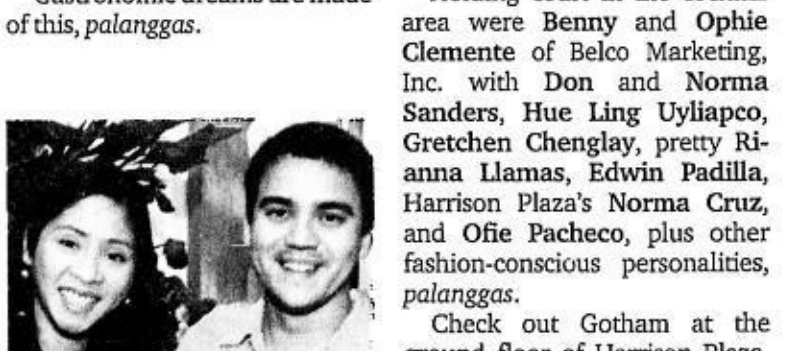
MARIONNAUD's Carmen Reyes and Ginny Marks

HANDSOME Germans Sebastian Pflug, Matthias Koppe and Tilo Weissberg

GOTHAM's GM Chinkee Clemente, Roy Señeres, Boy Sales, Ophie Clemente, Norma and Don Sanders, and Benny Clemente

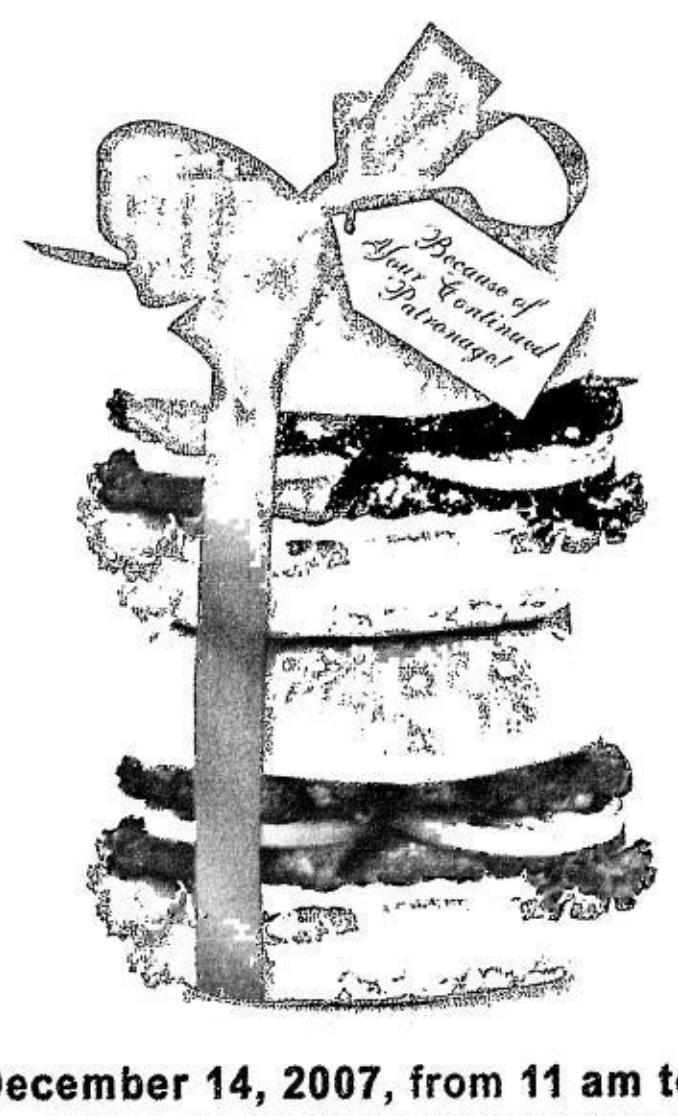
KATRINA Sandejas and husband, architect Gelo Mañosa


KATRINA Feist, Leica Carpo and Francesca Colayco


RICHIE and Kelly dela Merced with Maritoni Fernandez and Dritter Sarmiento

Get a DOUBLE SHARE of the TASTIEST GIFT this Christmas!

It's the DOUBLE Treat of the Season!



On December 14, 2007, from 11 am to 10 pm,
Get a FREE DOUBLE BROTHERS BURGER
when you BUY ONE Double Brothers Burger!
It's the Season's Burger Feast made twice as Tasty!

For Dine-In and Take-Out orders only.

ALABANG - 7710820 to 22 • BANILAD TOWN CENTER (CEBU) - (032) 3468864 • BRITTANY BAY (SUCAT) - 8373115 / 8370814 • BONIFACIO HIGH STREET - 856-2405 / 856-2408 • CAMP JOHN HAY (BAGUIO) - (074) 446 5702 to 03 • CONVERGYS BLDG. (AYALA AVE.) - 7511307 • GREENHILLS SHOPPING CENTER - 7061801 to 02 • HOBBIES OF ASIA - (MACAPAGAL AVE.) - 5581274 / 5581201 • ORTIGAS - 6377509 / 6373886 / 6385723 • PASEO de MAGALLANES (MAKATI) - 8549180/ 8543701 • PASEO de STA. ROSA - (LAGUNA) - (049) 5440450 • PASONG TAMO - 8944304 / 8944367 • TRINOMA (QUEZON CITY) - 9105400 • TOMAS MORATO - 3751111 / 3720111 / 3720202

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 4567, Series of 2007

BROTHERS BURGER
Satisfy your urge!
www.brothersburger.com.ph

Have A MMMerrier Get Together with Brothers Burger's Double, Double Treat!

'Tis the season to come together for some serious wining and dining. Families, friends and sweethearts gather around the yuletide table to celebrate and indulge to their hearts' (and stomachs') content.

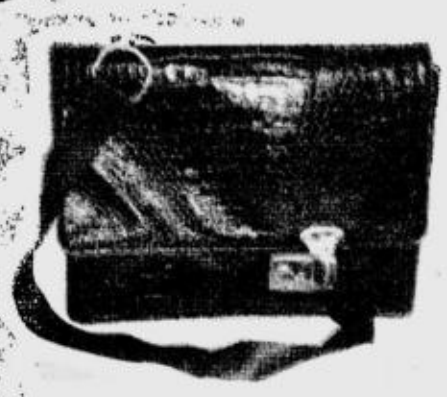
The good news is that you and your loved ones can enjoy your favorite burger for FREE! With the Double Treat promo, you can get a FREE Double Brothers Burger each time you buy a regular Double Brothers Burger! That's double the beef, double the tomato and lettuce; double the joy and merriment this season. So, gather your family and friends on December 14 (11am – 10pm) for a most deliciously affordable treat at a Brothers Burger outlet near you.

GIFT BAGSGIFT BAGS

DIESEL Nueva Bag

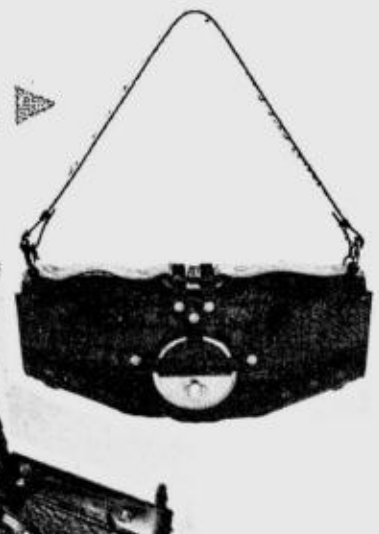
DKNY Large Hobo Metallic Leather in Bronze

FERRAGAMO evening handbag in Goatskin (available in silver)



FURLA Virginie Bag 2007

FURLA Bag 1985



DIESEL Rubens Bag

FERRAGAMO leather tote with round handle

FURLA 1980

DIESEL Selenio Bag

SHOES and apparel from Adidas Sports Performance series

Have a very sporty Christmas

FOR YOUR CHRISTMAS GIFT-SHOPPING list, Adidas offers its Sports Performance and Originals lines.

Sports Performance products carry high-end technologies such as ClimaLite and ClimaCool for heat and moisture management, and ForMotion for enhanced power of movement and performance.

Adidas also offers the Brotherhood footwear and apparel collection of NBA superstars Kevin Garnett, Gilbert Arenas, T-MAC McGrady, Dwight Howard, Chauncey Billups, and Tim Duncan.

For the sporty woman, the Adilibria and Fuse lines fuse performance and design seamlessly. They cover five sports categories—gym, running, yoga, tennis and swimming.

Meanwhile, the Stella McCartney line provides sportswear for the ultra-chic fashion maven.

Originals apparel and footwear are youthful, hip and functional. The Fall/Winter 2007 line boasts of the limited-edition Ali by Adidas. The collection also presents the Ali Values Project, featuring the works of contemporary artists celebrating the ideals that boxer Muhammad Ali embodies.

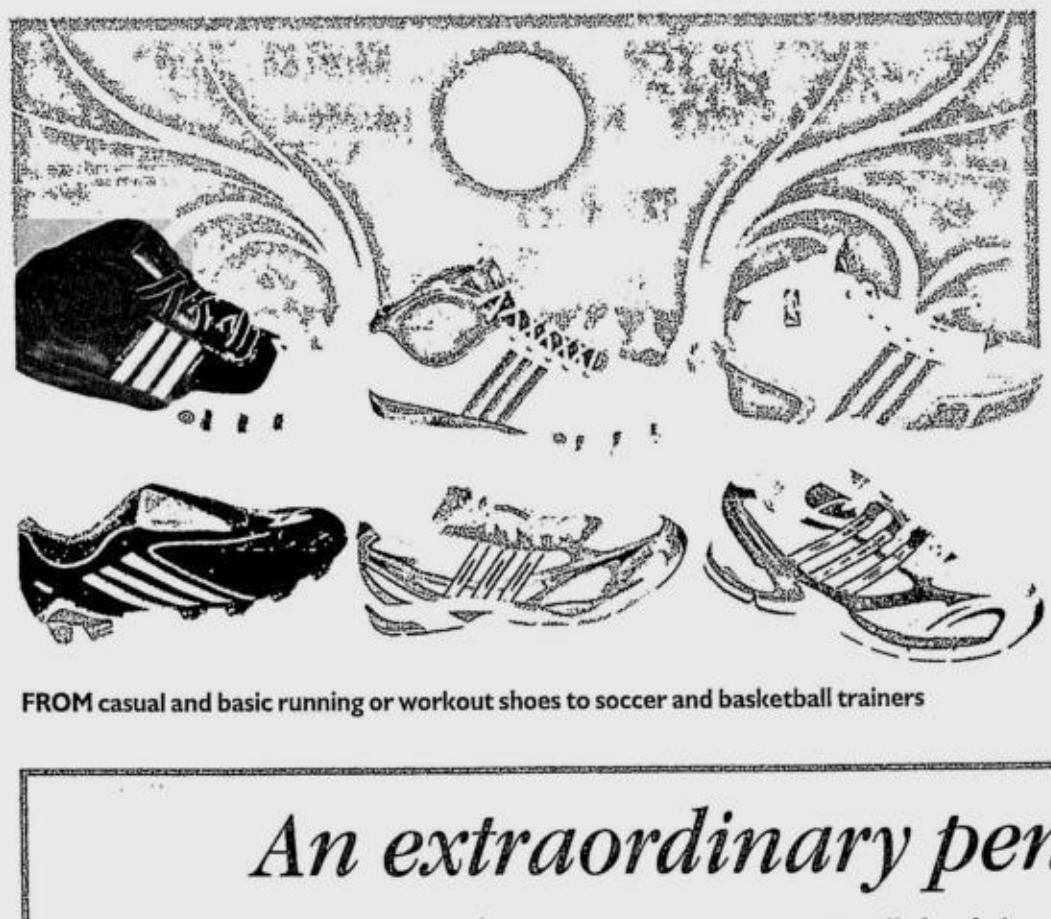
Other lines are Flavors of the World, a special limited-edition collection of luxury sneakers providing a special blend of sneaker tastes from around the world; Materials of the World, a collection that mixes well-established Adidas silhouettes with inspiration from various cultures around the world; Porsche Design, a collection where two of the world's most historic and authentic brands come together to produce timeless and classic shoes; Sleek Series, in which iconic Adidas sneaker silhouettes are reinterpreted in a fresh and unexpected feminine way; Respect M.E., a collection from Missy Elliot whose styles are a journey through dance history; and Country Football collection, a series of track jackets for both men and women inspired by Hispanic football in Peru, Cuba and the Bahamas.

Adidas Originals also includes the Adidas Philippines track jacket and Victor jeans specially created by Ino Caluza.

Adidas Sports Performance is available at leading malls nationwide, while Adidas Originals is available at Adidas concept stores, particularly at TriNoma.

CHOICE gift items from hip and chic sneakers to basic staple rubber shoes that your loved ones will surely like

YOUTHFUL, hip and functional pieces



FROM casual and basic running or workout shoes to soccer and basketball trainers

An extraordinary pencil case

IN TODAY'S WORLD WHERE STORE names hardly give us a clue as to what products they're selling (e.g. Tomato, Chocolate, Mango—selling women's apparel), this irresistibly attractive and engaging kiosk in Market! Market! and Robinsons Metroeast has a name that speaks from the heart.

Yup, this store really does sell everything you find in a pencil case, and more! Be it pens, pencils, markers, erasers, paper clips, scissors and even notebooks, notepads, sticky notes, diaries, etc. Pretty regular stuff, right? Wrong! There is nothing ordinary that you can find in this store. Everything is uniquely fun and handcrafted!

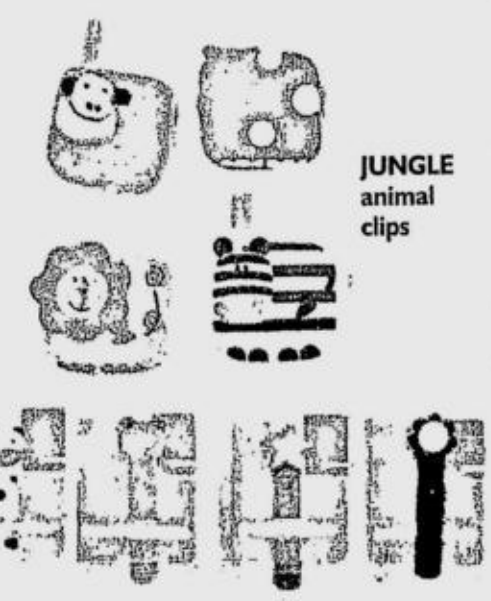
Collect a zoo with their wooden animal pen, pencil and paper clip selection, where the elephant comes complete with big ears, the lion with its stately mane, the fish ready to swim with their tails and fins, and the giraffe with a long enough neck to copy your seatmate's answers.

Pass a slipper note to your favorite seatmates, look intelligent by marking your books with one-of-a-kind sticky notes, organize the notes that you photocopied with frog and mouse staplers, or be simply fabulous with a fur-handled or bejeweled notepad bag in hand.

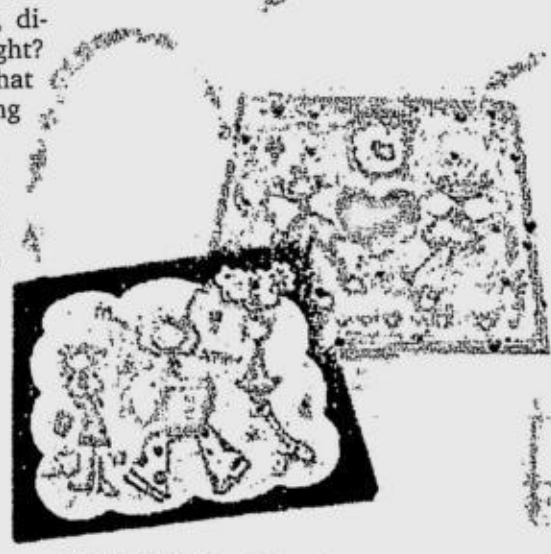
For the perfect day, while the boring subjects away by writing deep dark secrets in oh-so-cute diaries that come in 10 designs—one for each of your crushes!

Oh, and the prices are really cheap! Perfect for gifts and giveaways.

Visit Pencil Case soon and put extra in the ordinary!

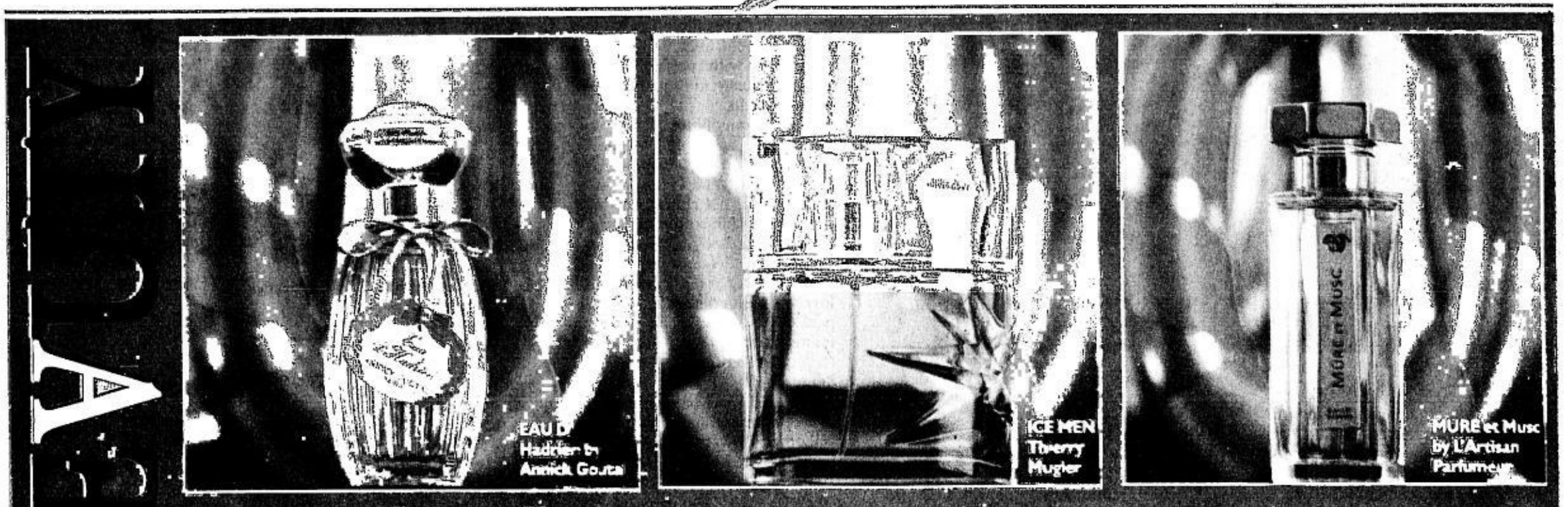


CANDY gift box



JEWEL-STRAP notebooks

JUNGLE animal clips



Holiday fragrance

KNOCKOUT!

Ria Francisco-Prieto

THE BEST GIFTS TO receive are presents that can be used, not left to gather dust. Personally I love scents. They're the easiest to give to friends and relatives since they can easily be appreciated.

Although everyone has a fave scent, it would be nice to introduce new scents to the special people in our lives. So with the help of Jeff from Rustan's, I took the afternoon off and allowed him to educate me on their best sellers. I figured the scents that sell well should be given the "People's Choice Awards."

And it was a really fruitful day since I was introduced to scents that could be given out as gifts. I picked up a few for myself and for my Christmas list.

Here are the top eight scents you would want to lay your nose on:

Acqua Di Genova (Classic). For men but great for women, too. This fragrance used to be the official fragrance of the royalty of Genova. It was just recently made public. It's a classic citrus scent, as if you just stepped out of the shower. Also it is the only fragrance available with the classic pump. Very prestigious.

Ice Men. Latest male fragrance by Thierry Mugler. The inspiration of this scent is the Silver Surfer of Fantastic Four. It's the ultimate expression of a hero's power and energy; perfect for the urban male. A woody, glacial, spicy fragrance.

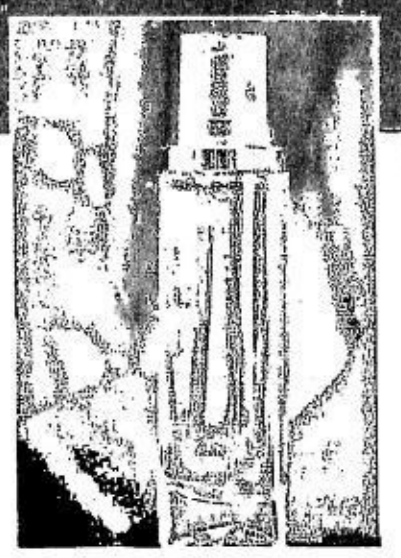
ANGEL
by Thierry Mugler

Innocent by Thierry Mugler. A sparkling delicious fragrance, it smells like tropical fruits. This will bring you back to your childhood days. The inspiration of Mugler is a child entering a circus. Great for teens and those who want to remember happy "innocent days."

L'Ombre Dans L'eau by Diptyque. Unisex scent. A fragrance that doesn't differentiate between masculine and feminine. The bestseller of Diptyque, it evokes luxury and sophistication. Inspiration has notes of crumpled black turrant leaves and rose petals.

Blu Mediterraneo by Acqua Di Parma. Unisex. The official fragrance of the royalty of Parma in Italy. This blue Mediterranean line is the aroma therapy line. Composed of four scents that are present in the Mediterranean: citrus, basil, almond and fig. The bestseller is the Arancia line.

Angel by Thierry Mugler. The women's scent that is the bestseller all over the world. A sparkling, delicious and sexy fragrance. It's the first perfume for women that is totally flowerless. The No. 1 fragrance in France for the last six years. When it was launched in 1992, it opened a new olfactive category now known as the gourmant family.



INNOCENT by Thierry Mugler

L'OMBRE Dans L'eau by Diptyque

BLU MEDITERRANEO
by Acqua di Parma

Mure Et Musc by L'Artisan Perfumeur. Women's scent. Launched in 1978, it was the first fragrance that used blackberry and introduced a new generation of perfumes. With notes of citrus and fruits. Musky fragrance. Famous for its sweet trail of blackberry.

Eau d' Hadrien by Annick Goutal. Women's scent. A cult fragrance from Paris which values originality, authenticity, and refinement. Eau d' Hadrien is a citrus fragrance with the inspiration of Tuscany. Tonic, fresh and sparkling, it is loved by Liv Tyler and Sharon Stone.

Cleanse, tone and perfume

OLIVE Face Toner

Olive Daily Face Cleanser

The patented oxygenated A.O.C. olive oil and olive water complex helps in cell renewal for healthy, radiant skin. L'Occitane's patented blend of olive oil and olive water (P995) is rich in antioxidizing elements to make stressed and dull skin healthier. For best results, use morning and evening. Follow with Olive Water Face Toner and Radiance Moisturizing Cream. Use Olive Express Radiance Mask once a week.

Olive Face Water Toner

Freshens skin without stripping or drying. All-natural and alcohol-free. Choose Olive Daily Face Cleanser and Olive Water Face Toner (P1,195), followed by Daily Face Care SPF 15, for morning regimen.

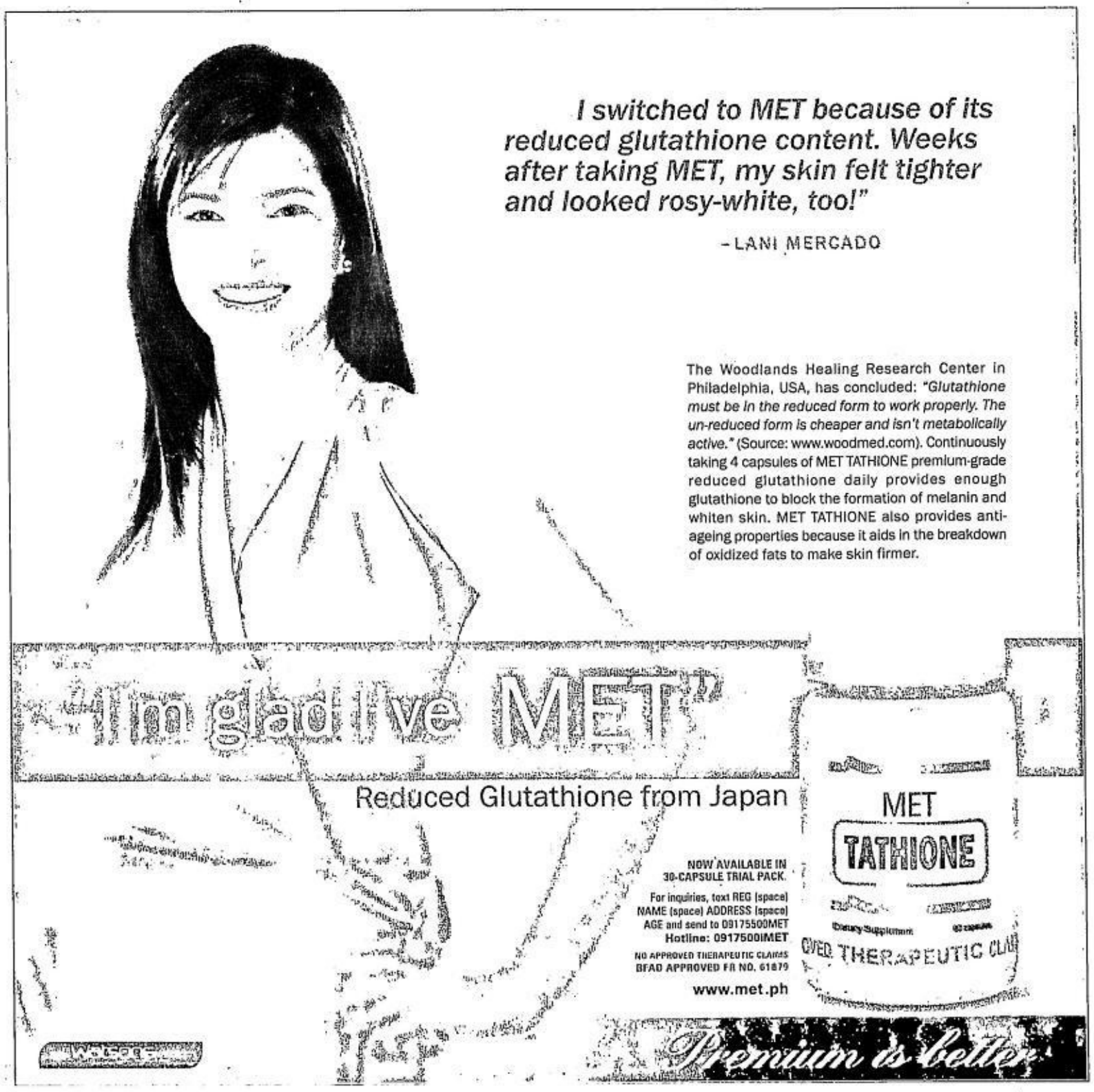
THÉ VERT Green Tea Body Milk

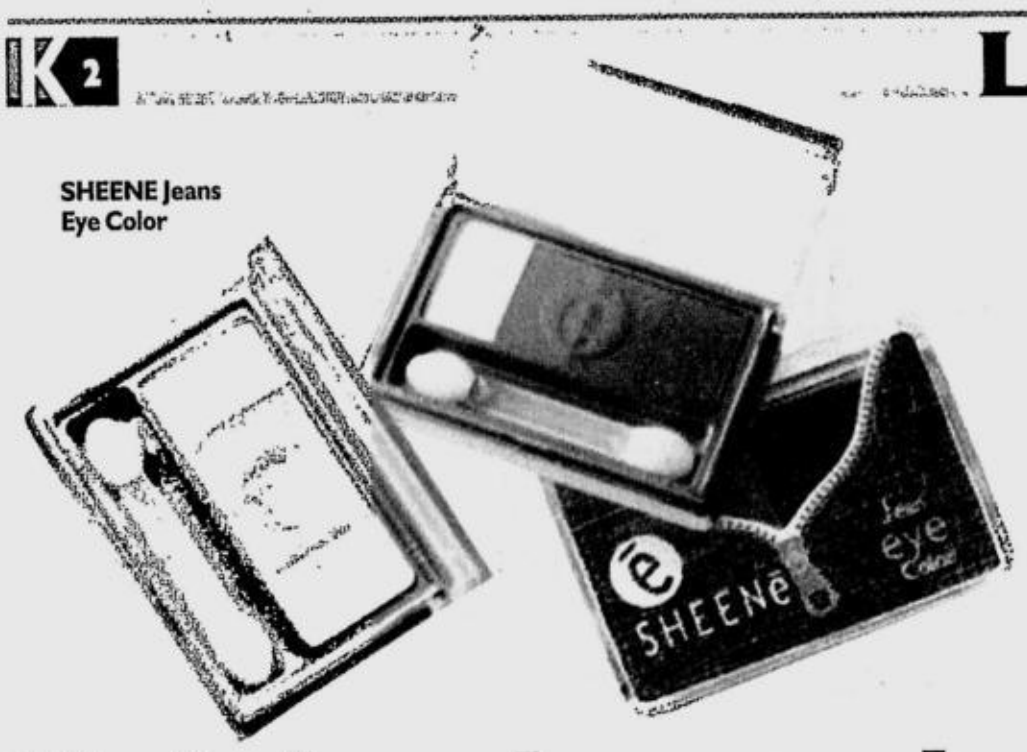
Green Tea Body Milk

A blend of green tea and citrus notes and rich in nourishing grapeseed oil, the body milk (P1,450) is quickly absorbed, leaving skin supple, soft and pleasantly perfumed.

Green Tea EDT

Subtle complex of fresh aromas is invigorating. The tonic green aroma creates sensations of well-being and freshness (P2,675).





SHEENE Jeans Eye Color

Kim's beauty secret

THE NO. 1 TEEN STAR OF this generation has teamed up with the No. 1 teen cosmetics brand from Thailand.

Kim Chiu has discovered Sheene, a line of cosmetics that has everything she wants: trendy packaging, a wide range of colors, affordable prices and, best of all, products that are made for her youthful skin.

Sheene (pronounced "shine") is Thailand's most popular skincare and cosmetics brand, and it's a bestseller mainly because of its fashionable style and affordable price range. Since its introduction to Philippine market last year, it has become popular among trendy teens. It has also been recognized with a merit excellence award from the Philippine Fashion Association.

This season, Sheene is treating holiday shoppers to fabulous discounts. It has a Christmas package consisting of Sheene Oil Free Spa Fresh facial wash, SPF 18 Oil Free UV Protect Powder and Kiss Lip Gloss that comes in a red cosmetic bag for only P299.75. Sheene is also offering a yearend sale with 50-percent discounts on Sheene Jean Eye Color, Cheek Color and Lipstick and Empha Lip Duo.

SHEENE Jeans Cheek Color

Sheene cosmetics are available in selected Watsons branches, Robinsons Department Stores, The Landmark, TriNoma Ayala Mall, NCCC Mall in Davao and Palawan. It also has a direct-selling program that brings Sheene cosmetics closer to your homes. Call 9129939, 9111584; or e-mail sheenecosmetics@gmail.com.

SHEENE Jeans Lip Color

SHEENE Empha Lip Duo

SHEENE Christmas Pack

Christmas with a fresh, fragrant glow

THIS CHRISTMAS, GIVE THE gift of freshness and fragrance as Fuller Life Direct Selling (formerly Sara Lee Direct Selling) fills Christmas with perfect holiday scents and essentials with its Pick and Mix deals.

Make moms bloom with pampering gifts and a full makeover kit. Georgie on Ice, Possibilities for Women and Ivana Pink present a collection of matching perfumed body talc, skin-softening lotion, body splash, body spray, and antiperspirant deodorants to keep moms feeling fresh, smooth and lovely smelling all day. For the perfect Christmas makeover, give moms a complete set of Colour Collection cosmetics including Smoothening Lipstick specially formulated to help minimize lines, increase lip volume, and smoothen lips to make it look plumper and younger-looking and the Maxi-Lash Definition Mascara that boosts eyelash volume.

For lady friends, there's a wide array of the season's party-perfect body spray scents to choose from. The Natural body spray collection comes in refreshing Sunny Garden, Blue Ocean and Spring Rain scents. There are also body mists from Ivana Pink and Georgie on Ice. For fruity scent lovers, Fruity Blooms Splash Cologné is available in Strawberry Bliss, Apple Crisp, Kiwi Delight and Mango Mandarin scents. And for scents that suit just about anyone, there's Cool Splash that comes in Zestful Purple, Cool Blue and Fresh Green scents.

For the men in your life, Fuller Life suggests refreshing scents that will leave them smelling fresh even amidst the action-packed holiday. Blue Crush Dude, Fidelity Blue, Midnight and Possibilities for Men come in different forms: roll-on antiperspirant/deodorant, body splash, body spray and body mists to enhance their masculine appeal. There's also Action and Adventure body sprays that come in Thrill, Chase, and Power. And to keep dads real fresh all day, give them casual Hanes shirts which feature textured long sleeves perfect for the cold holiday season. There's also the classic two-color tee made of comfortable cotton-blend fabric. Sporty dads, on the other hand, will love Champion's new men's collection of high-quality and comfortable athletic shirts.

And because Christmas is for the little ones, kids should also feel fresh and sweet-smelling this fun-filled season. Give them the best holiday pampering with hypo-allergenic, pH-balanced, and dermatologist-tested products from Zwitsal—a complete line of baby shampoo, baby bath, baby lotion, powder and cologne.

Avail of up to 71-percent discount when you buy any of these exciting combinations of scents and essentials until Dec. 22 only. With this merry mix of holiday deals from Fuller Life, every family would surely be fresh, fragrant and gorgeous this Christmas season.

Fuller Life Direct Selling Philippines Inc. is the authorized distributor of prestigious brands that include Playtex, Hanes, Champion, Wonderbra, Just My Size, Girls' Attitudes, Colour Collection, Beauty Touch, Ivana, Georgie on Ice, VS. Versus, Nutrimetics and Zwitsal. Fuller Life Direct Selling Inc. is also known as Fuller Cosmetics in Latin America and Nutrimetics in many parts of the world. If you have questions, need additional information or wish to become a dealer, call the toll free number 1-800-10 FULLER1 (1-800-10-3855371).

COLOUR Collection Smoothening Lipstick

MAKEUP collection from Fuller Life Direct Selling

MAXI-LASH Definition Mascara

ZWITSAL baby shampoo, bath, lotion, powder and cologne

I first thought that MET is only for skin whitening. 'Yun pala, ang dami rin niyang health benefits! MET is really cool!

—VALERIE CONCEPCION

Unknown to most, glutathione brings with it a host of amazing health benefits. Taking 2 capsules of MET TATHIONE daily helps to detoxify the body, strengthen the immune system, delay ageing, boost sexual potency, prevent skin allergies and stress-related diseases... plus, inhibit the formation of melanin to whiten the skin.

Shine like a diamond

MAKE UP FOR EVER'S SHINE-on Powder, Glitter, and Diamond Powder shine with the elegance and mystery of this most coveted of stones.

Inspired by the diamond's distinct qualities such as purity, femininity and a woman's desire to shine, the Holiday Look creates a complexion that is radiant and natural and eyes that reflect a blend of light hues. Lips are swept in a glossy shine.

SHINE-ON Powder

To give skin tone a light, pearly pink finish, Shine-on Powder offers a transparent powder with light-reflecting particles that helps highlight facial features naturally. It has ceramides that maintain the skin's moisture and mineral powders that allow a natural and long-lasting feel.

For a more intense look, apply by dabbing lightly with a powder puff. For a natural look, sweep over the entire face.

Glitter gives the eyes, body or hair a bright, crystal look. Its brilliant pigments provide metalized polyester for an intense color and graded crystals that add further glitter when light is reflected.

A product unique to Make Up For Ever, Diamond Powder has a subtle and elegant shimmer. Ultra-light and incomparably fine diamond-like particles are actually borosilicate crystals that capture light and provide scintillating luminosity to the skin. On cheeks, eyes, lips and the body, Diamond Powder adds a captivating effect to any look. Diamond Powder is especially created for use on the eye area.

Enjoy treats at Make Up For Ever boutiques. Receive cash coupons, Kohl pencil and make-up case with a minimum purchase.

Make Up For Ever is available at 3/L Shangri-La Plaza Mall, tel. 6385702; 3/L The Block, SM City North Edsa, tel. 4420368; B:8 Bonifacio High Street, Bonifacio Global Taguig City (opening Dec. 2007); (counter) Watson's, G/F Mall 1, SM Mall of Asia, tel. 5560435, and Marionnaud, 2/L SM Mall of Asia, tel. 5560422.

DIAMOND Powder

Two new men's fragrances

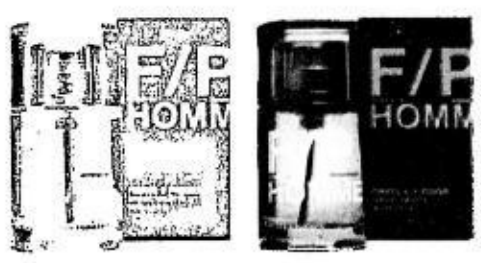
FRUITS & PASSION, A CANADIAN-BASED fragrance company, has launched F/P Homme, a new line of fine scents for men. This modern and masculine collection is composed of two eau de toilettes and four complementary body care products.

F/P Homme facilitates one's daily grooming rituals with products that have multiple functions, practical packaging, masculine and distinctive colors, and simple labelling.

Fruits & Passion also took into consideration the number one complaint of men when it comes to eau de toilettes: poor fragrance durability. To address this complaint, the F/P Homme eau de toilettes were formulated with 13-percent to 15-percent perfume concentration, compared to the 10-percent concentration found in others EDTs in the market.

The two F/P Homme eau de toilettes have very distinctive characteristics:

Numero 001 is green, fresh and aromatic with head notes of Florida grapefruit, middle notes of French sage, ginger, and bottom notes of green tea and cool musk.



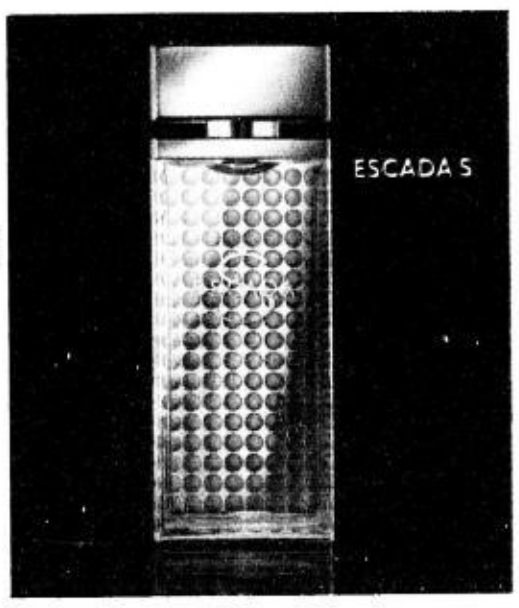
FRUITS & Passion's F/P Homme line

Numero 002 is woodsy, amber, sophisticated, with head notes of Bergamot of Calabria and cardamom seeds. Its middle notes come from Italian cypress and fresh vetiver, and the bottom notes from mahogany wood and ambergris.

Fruits & Passion makes life easy for men by creating multipurpose products. For example, the shower gel works as both a cleanser and shampoo, and the body spray can be used as a light eau de toilette. The after shave lotion and soap complete the daily grooming ritual.

Fruits & Passion is exclusively distributed by Stores Specialists, Inc. and is located at Greenbelt 3 and Alabang Town Center.

F/P Homme Numero 001 body spray



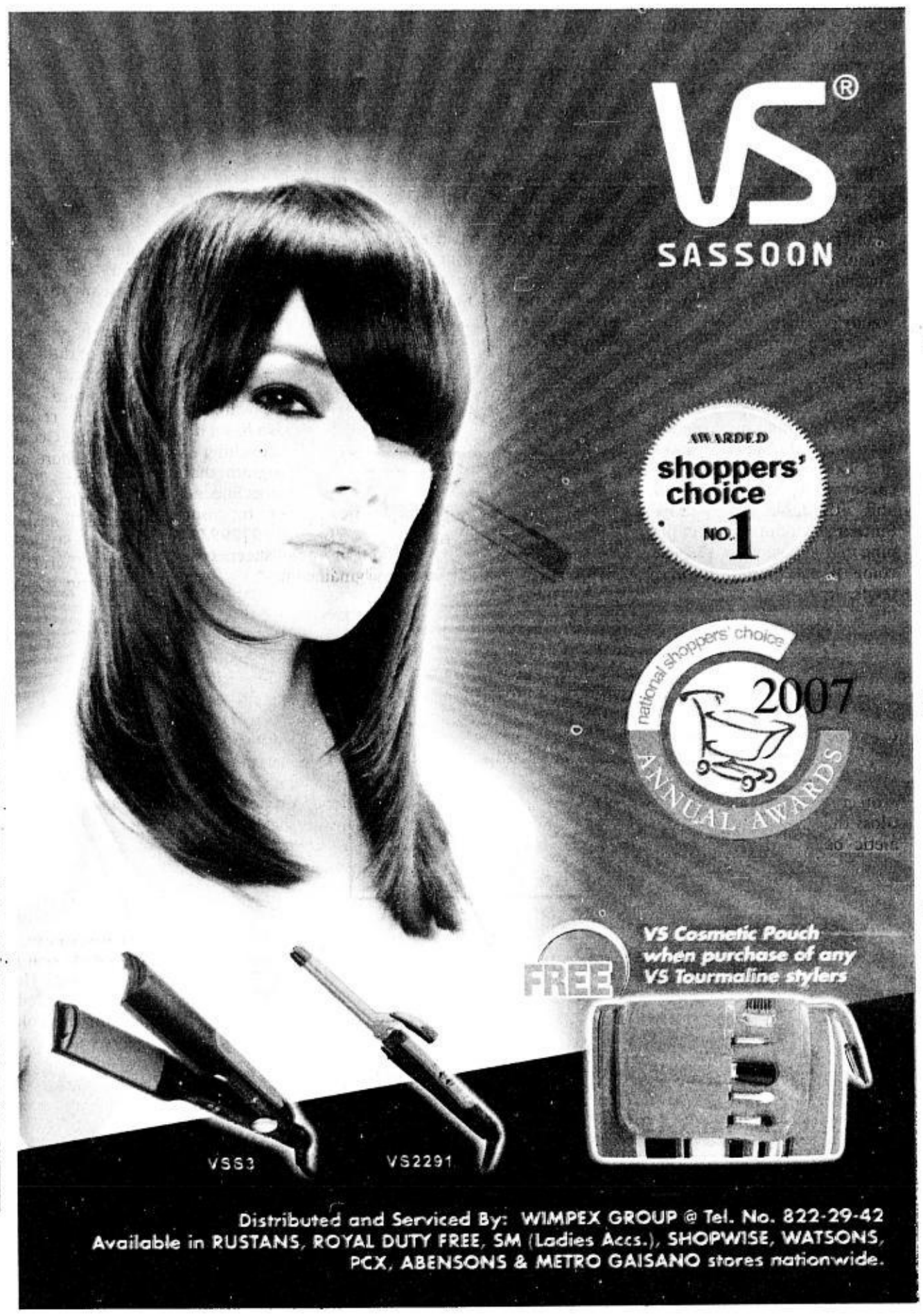
Sensual scent

PRESENTED IN AN ELEGANT BOTTLE with embossed red dots in a geometric pattern, Escada S combines classic feminine musk essences with a hint of Hazelnut for a sensual twist. The scent also includes fruity notes of Plum and Blackcurrant; floral essences of Red Pepper, Rose and Almond Blossom; and wood notes of Mahogany and Sandalwood.

Exclusively distributed by Rustan Marketing Corp., Escada S is available in all leading department stores nationwide in 30-ml (P2,750), 50-ml (P3,950) and 90-ml (P5,100) EDP; and 200-ml body lotion (P2,000).

PROVOCATIVE DUO

The Hugo Fashion FranchisE unveils its first his and hers scent, Hugo XX & Hugo XY. A fragrance for him, Hugo XY has a green accord of Pear Tree Leaves and aromatic green bouquet featuring Crushed Ice, Basil Leaves and Mint. Base notes of Lebanese and Cedar Wood create a woody drydown with a hint of earthiness and the Hugo signature pine tree note. The ultimate match—Hugo XX—is a smooth and luminous feminine fragrance with its predominant top note of Lychee which unfolds into a creamy-floral heart of Basmati Rice and Jasmine Sambac. Sandalwood notes give the fragrance a gentle woody finish. Their distinctive and unique bottles shaped like spray cans in chrome for Hugo XX and burnt sienna for Hugo XY reflect their conflicting yet complimentary natures. Exclusively distributed by Rustan Marketing Corp., Hugo XX (100 ml EDT, P4,150) and Hugo XY (10 ml EDT, P4,000) are available nationwide in leading department stores.



Happiness in a bottle

IN 1886, DAVID H. MCCONNELL, a door-to-door book salesman from New York presented perfumes along with books, in what is known today as a "gift with purchase" offer.

Seeing that the perfumes were more popular than the books, McConnell concentrated on his burgeoning fragrance business and named it the California Perfume Company. These are the beginnings of what is today the global direct-selling giant, Avon.

As the country's leader in fine fragrances, the company's Avon representatives and customers enjoy the scents of top-selling brands such as Sweet Honesty, Imari and Far Away.

Now, Avon unveils its first celebrity fragrance called Angel Locsin Wish of Happiness.

Launched for the holidays, Angel Locsin Wish of Happiness is designed to capture Angel's true personality and aspiration. This fragrance also embodies her youth and free-spiritedness.

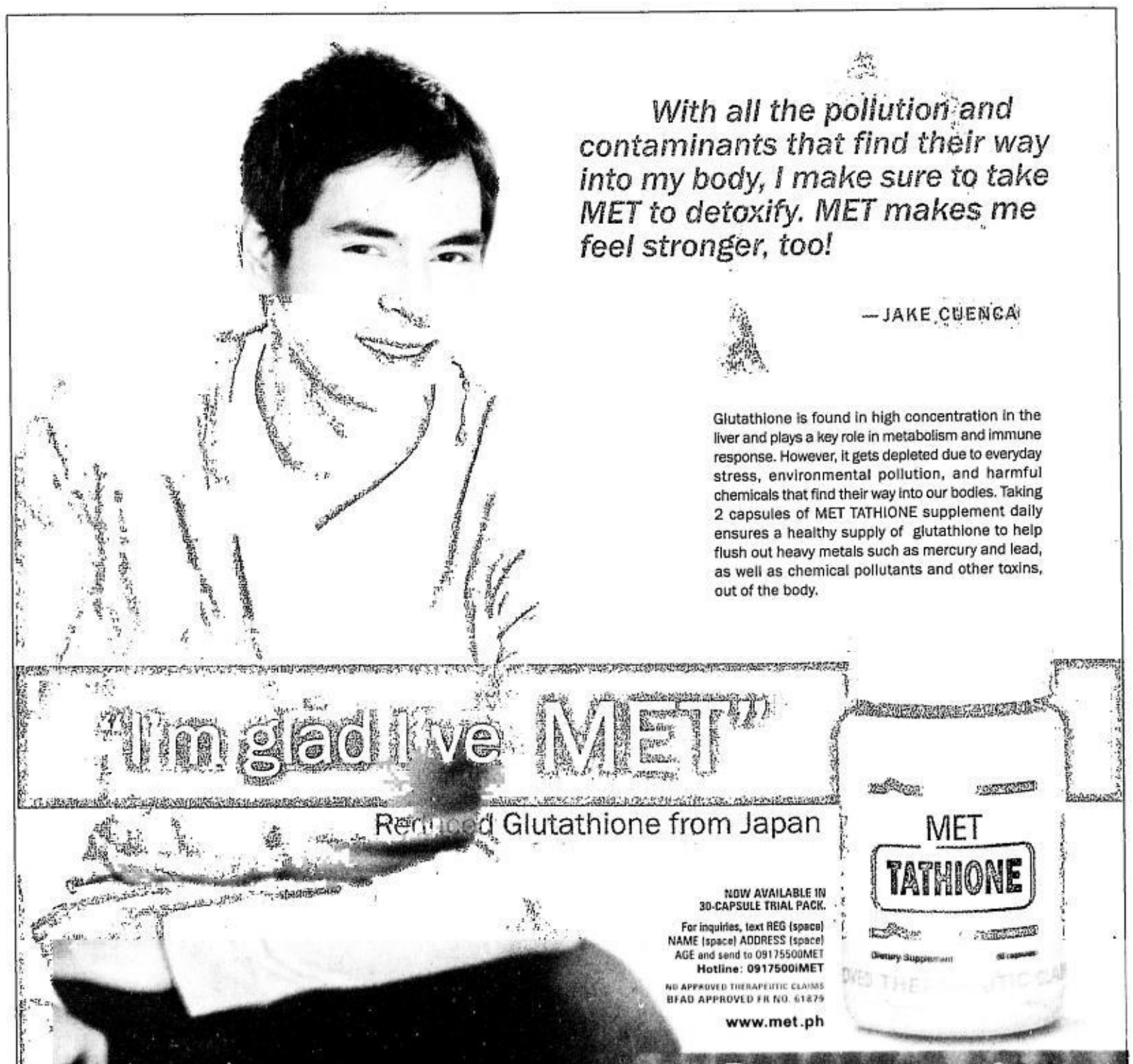
Angel Locsin Wish of Happiness eau de toilette combines citrus fruits and florals, with notes of pink grapefruit, sweet lemon, pear and orange blossom.

One 50-ml bottle of Angel Locsin Wish of Happiness is available for P800.

For a limited time, an introductory price of P399 per bottle is available through your local Avon Lady.

Call 864-Avon (2866) or e-mail helpdesk.ph@Avon.com.

ANGEL Locsin Wish of Happiness



Floral fruity scent

MARY KAY PRESENTS Bella Belara, a new fragrance that stirs up feelings of femininity, happiness, and confidence.

The floral fruity scent blends apricot and red nectarine. The heart of the fragrance are dew-covered rose petals and Moroccan jasmine hinted with a mix of creamy blond woods and cool moss linger.

Call 8596211 or visit www.marykay.com.ph.

Keeping slim and pretty during binge-prone Christmas

MAKEOVER 911
Kinny Salas

UNLESS IT IS something essential on a daily basis such as rice, protein salt and cooking oil, I would rather not receive sweets and snacks this Christmas.

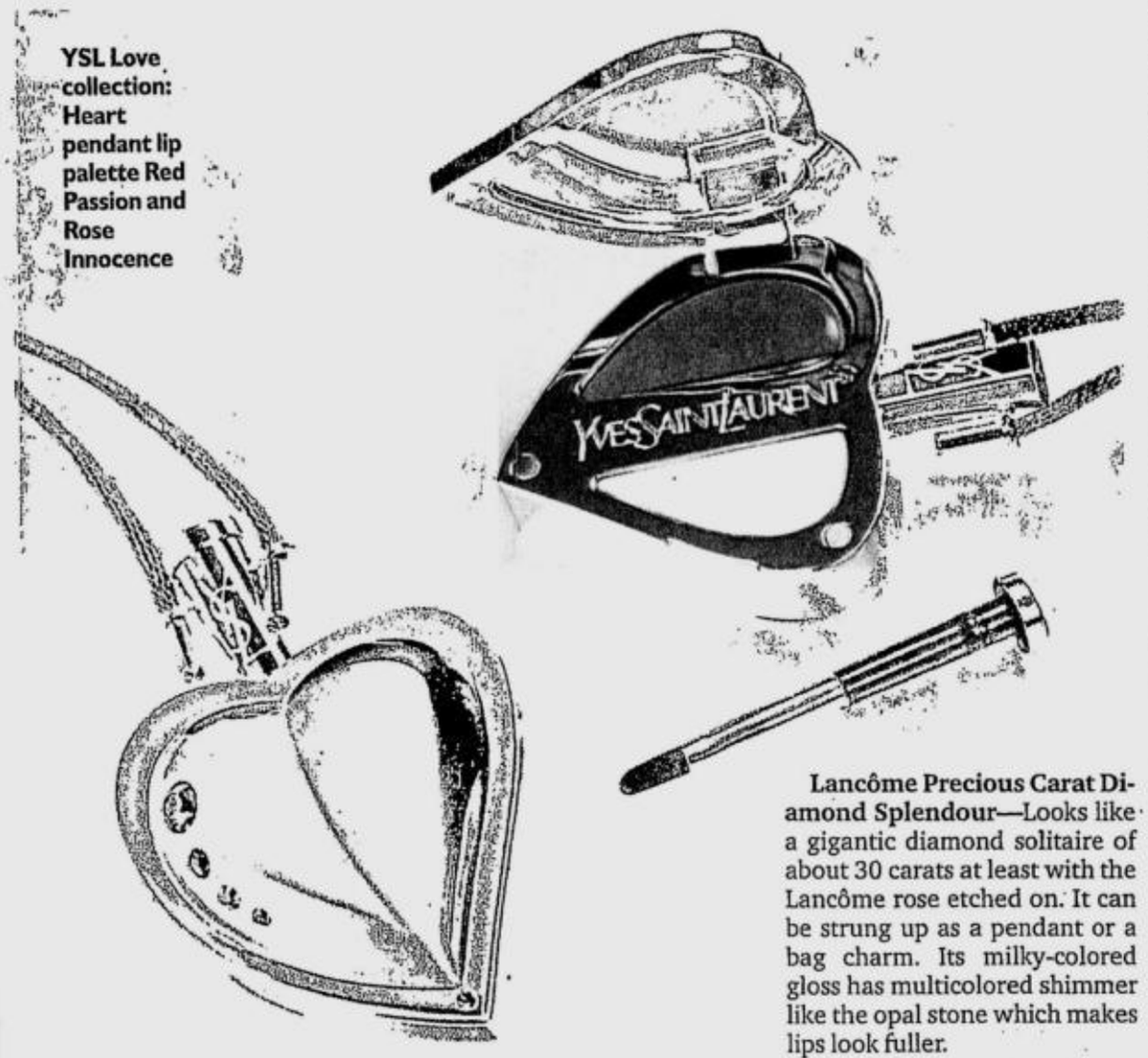
A lot of us are not happy about the excess weight and get cranky about it. To get our minds off food there is nothing like great fragrances, products in pretty packaging, and body-enhancing potions that make us want to go out and show off.

Here are great fragrances for him and her in travel sizes:

D&G Light Blue EDP and Pour Homme—The fresh, clean, slightly aquatic aroma is something perfectly suited for our tropical weather. Men's: 75-ml EDT with 75-ml deodorant. Women's: 50-ml EDP and 200-ml shower gel. For the energetic sports-minded couple.

Gucci Pour EDP II and Pour Homme II—A sexier variation of the Light Blue which still smells fresh, but the pepper notes make it too grown-up for a sporty cologne. I imagine them more on young executive types who go out for lunch at hotels and clubs after work or watch plays to relax. Women's: 30-ml EDP; 50-ml lotion. Men's: 50-ml EDT; 75-ml deodorant.

Escada Sunset Heat for Ladies and for Men—This is for the party-animal sort of couple who love beach parties at resorts and mingling at outdoor cafes. It's fruity, fun and flirtatious! Women's: 30-ml EDT and a pretty cosmetic pouch. Men's: 50-ml EDT, 150-ml shower gel and black toiletry bag.



YSL Love collection: Heart pendant lip palette Red Passion and Rose Innocence

Those of you who do not want too many bottles cluttering their bathroom counters, and who do not want to smell too girly or too masculine should take a look at ISM (Inno Sotto Mondo) fragrances at any Essenses branch. They smell fresh, clean, and I guarantee you at least one of the five variants will remind you of something good about your childhood. Abraccio to me smells like freshly cut limes reminiscent of a favorite uncle. Deauville smells like Spanish baby colognes with a grown-up twist, and Huit is like comforting Wheat cereal, with notes of vanilla and rice pudding.

Beauty meets bling

Now your lip gloss can be your best accessory. Tip: when it runs out, scoop out a favorite lipstick shade and spatula on the palette.

YSL's Love collection lip palette is encased in a heart-shaped solid silver locket pendant with garnet crystals sprinkled on. I wear mine all the time and women watch in fascination as I open up and retouch my lipstick. It's pretty heavy though, so be careful not to swing it on anybody.

Lancôme Precious Carat Diamond Splendour—Looks like a gigantic diamond solitaire of about 30 carats at least with the Lancôme rose etched on. It can be strung up as a pendant or a bag charm. Its milky-colored gloss has multicolored shimmer like the opal stone which makes lips look fuller.

Good deals: Brook and Ivy, a high-quality local brand comparable to the likes of The Body Shop and Bath and Body Works, will have a sale Dec. 15-31 at their Robinson's Galleria branch kiosk. Prices range from P165-P225. Not a bad deal for Christmas. Tip: Dessert lovers may indulge with their Vanilla Vine body line as this is one way to get your fill without getting fatter.

Better body

To ensure my clothes fit better on certain areas, I keep my supply of Clarins Total Body Lift for stubborn cellulite body gel and Avon Cellusculpt. Skin really does contract so jeans loosen up.

Other tricks: Lymphatic drainage massage and Moxa-Ventoza to get the gasses and liquids out that puff up the calves, bra line and waist area. Downside: frequent bathroom visits and gas.

Fastest way to lose two or more centimeters to fit a slinky dress? Ultra-slim at Philosophy Salon. You have to block out three hours off your day, but that slinky outfit will surely fit with room to spare. That's my last appointment for my wedding day before having my makeup done so I can do justice to my Inno Sotto gown. Wish me luck!

D&G Light Blue Pour Homme deo stick and cologne

METRO
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Our City of Affections and Disaffections is made up of stories. Your stories. Tell us all about it.
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INQUIRER

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UP Vocal Ensemble
December 17 • 6pm

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December 20 • 6pm

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ANGELOS
The Four Tenors

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LIFESTYLE

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CHANEL
by Karl Lagerfeld AP

Chanel's homage to artisans

LONDON—FASHION HOUSE CHANEL on Thursday paid homage to artisans and craftspeople who make feathers, pearls and silk flower accessories by staging a fashion show in London.

Since 2002, in addition to the regular set of fashion shows, Chanel designer Karl Lagerfeld has held an annual show to put on display creations made by artisans and craftspeople, whose businesses have been acquired by Chanel to ensure their survival and to pass along their techniques and knowledge.

In an old post-sorting center that is being converted to an auction house, some 450 people, including several celebrities, took in a wide variety of dresses, materials and colors.

All of the combinations included twirling feathers, embroideries of pearls, as well as a great deal of silk and ribbons.

As if to hammer home the fact that the show was in London, some models carried handbags emblazoned with the British flag, with bowler hats also seen scattered around.

The clothes exhibited on Thursday will be available for men and women from May.

Following similar shows in Tokyo in 2004, New York in 2005 and Monte Carlo in 2006, the British capital was chosen for its link to the men who influenced Coco Chanel's life.

Among them were Arthur Capel, often referred to as "Boy Capel," who gave her the funds to open her first store, and the Duke of Westminster, the richest man in England, with whom she had a relationship in 1925. *AFP*

CHANEL REUTERS

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There is a rockstar in you. Look it, and live it. Be the next Ray-Ban endorser and live the life of a real one. Just send us a photo featuring the Rockstar in you wearing an authentic Ray-Ban eyewear from October 22, 2007 - January 22, 2008. Five winning entries will be used for various Ray-Ban advertising materials for 2008. Plus, each winner will take home Rockstar prizes like Motorola RAZR² V8, P 20,000.00 worth of grooming and cosmetic kit from Shu Uemura, Canon Digital IXUS 900 Ti, and a limited edition *24-karat gold plated Ray-Ban Aviator.*
Canon
MOTOROLA RAZR²
shu uemura
etc
INQUIRER

Did you know?
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Introduced in 1951. Like the Hula Hoop, Cream Corn Starch has been used by generations.
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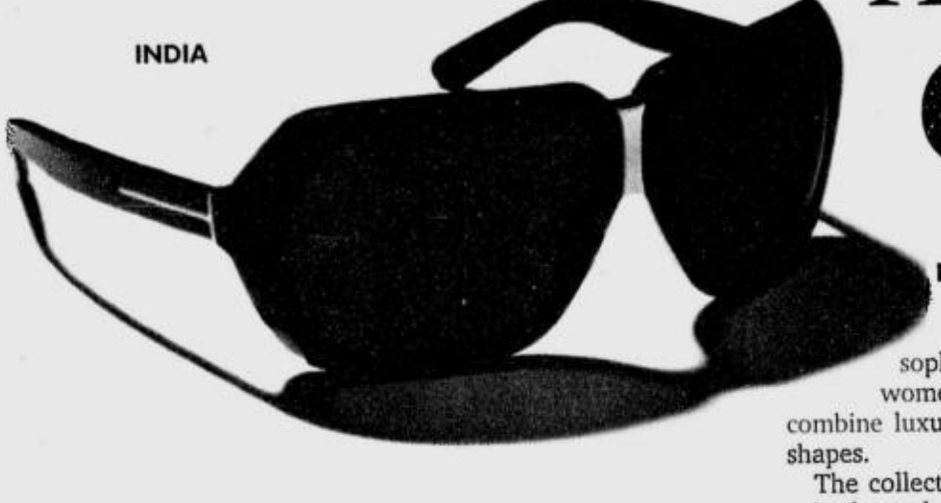
ANOUK

SHELBY

Arresting eyewear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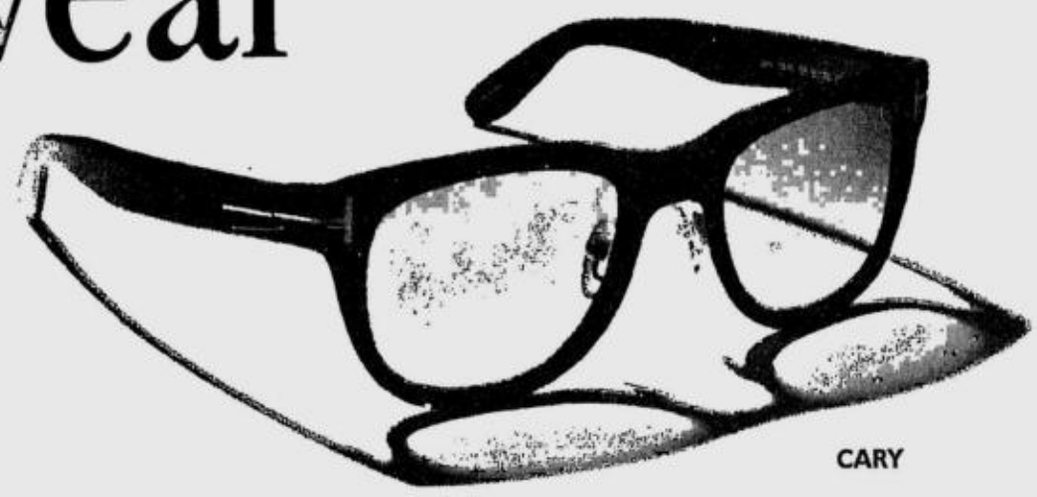
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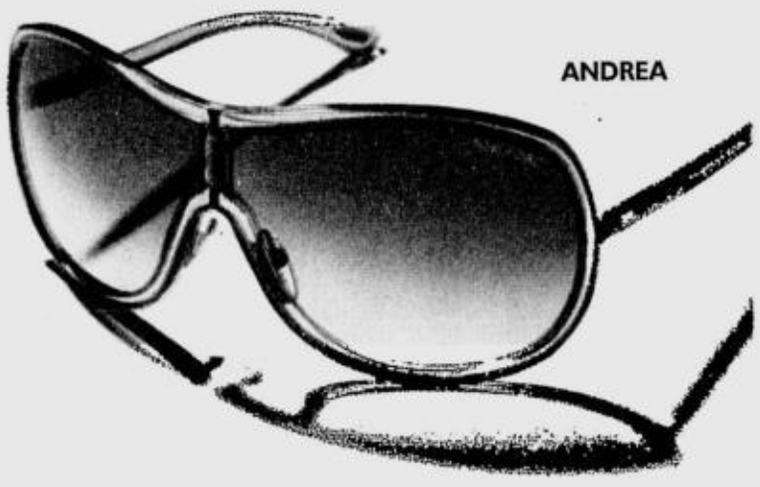
ANDREA

THE TOM FORD SPRING 2007 Eyewear collection introduces a new range of sophisticated styles for men and women consisting of 27 frames that combine luxurious materials and dramatic shapes.

The collection focuses on classically inspired angular shapes as well as exaggerated aviator styles with unusual lines and sensual curves that are designed to wrap the face in an organic way.

Each frame employs a unique combination of form, texture and color to create a dramatic illusion of weight that feels substantial without sacrificing comfort for the wearer.

For women, styles such as the Elizabeth, Serena, Fiona and Isabella feature amplified lenses surrounded by dramatically rounded frames. The Margaux and Savannah have been created by sculpting thin metal rims around oversized gradient lenses for a stunning effect on the face. The Anouk offers sharper lines and angles for a slightly '50s-inspired frame.

For men, the Brad and Eric frames offer aviator shapes with an innovative double bridge that conveys a strong, confident look. Additional variations on the aviator theme include the John, Charles, Shelby, and Aiden frames with subtly elegant details.

Using the highest quality plastics, metals and leathers, the Tom Ford Eyewear collection focuses on meticulous craftsmanship and attention to detail. Rich acetates and metals receive exclusive treatments, including chromatic finishes to produce beautiful frames of the highest quality.

Colors range from the more traditional high gloss black acetate and shades of warm brown Havana, to more unexpected tones of citrine, green and Bordeaux. Solid and gradient-colored lenses vary in shades of smoke, brown, blue, and green. The gradient tints intensify from light to dark, adding a seductive element to the eyes of the wearer.

Each pair of glasses in the Tom Ford Eyewear collection features refined signature details including a discreet metal plaque embossed with the signature logo, or the restrained placement of the designers initial in metal 'T's that wrap from the front of the frames around the temples.

The Tom Ford Eyewear collection is handmade in Italy by Marcolin.

We're sharing that number one feeling

Informing and inspiring Filipino readers for more than two decades through balanced news and fearless views, the Philippine Daily Inquirer has undoubtedly become the country's number 1 newspaper. Our heartfelt thanks for making the Inquirer a part of your daily reading habit.

As we celebrate our 22nd anniversary, Inquirer grants 22 loyal readers their wishes – from an exciting wish like meeting your local idol to a romantic one like celebrating your 25th wedding anniversary in a beach resort. Let us know what you really want. In 300 words or less, tell us:

1) How long have you been reading the Philippine Daily Inquirer?
2) What do you like most about the Inquirer, and we dare ask, what do you like least?
3) What is your number 1 wish that Inquirer can grant you, and why?

INQUIRER

36th Anniversary Christmas SALE!

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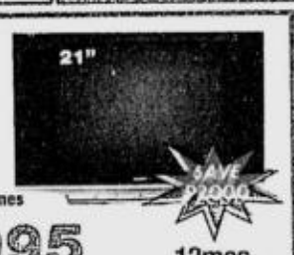

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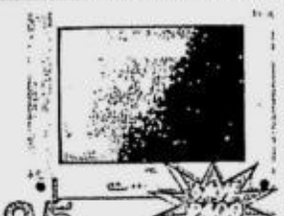

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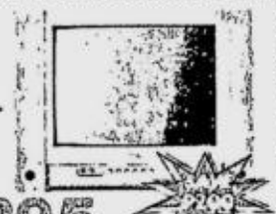

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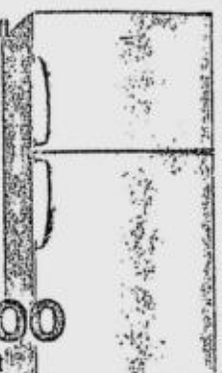

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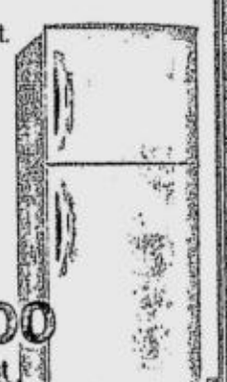

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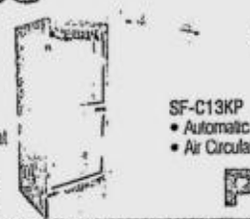

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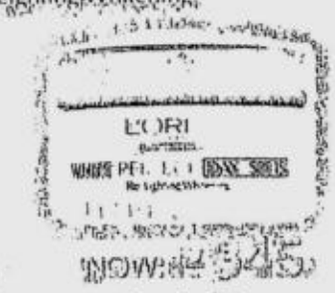

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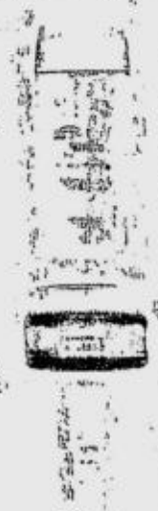

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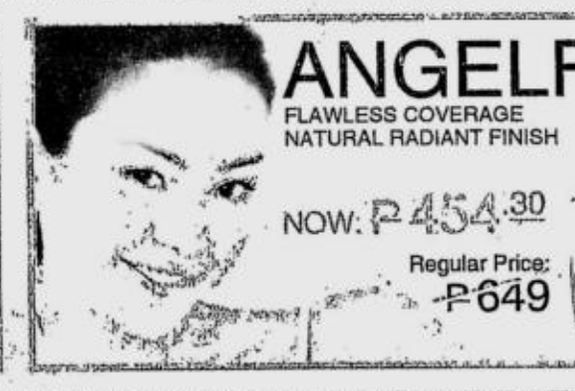

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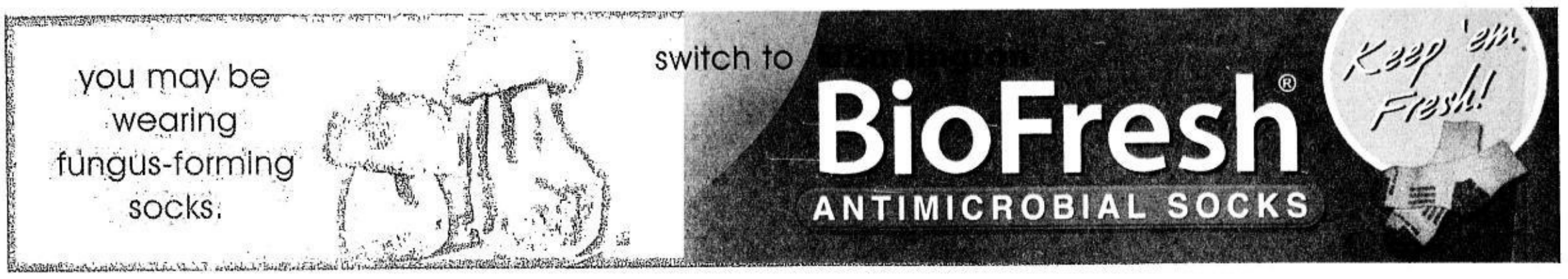
Green Santas

Little Santa Claus trainees wear green suits as they learn how to work for Planet Earth from Green Santa, at the Kidzania career theme park in Tokyo on Wednesday. This Santa from Denmark is in Japan as an ecology goodwill ambassador until Christmas Day. AFP



MMFF, interrupted

...well, almost—it's an annual jam in post-prod

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

NOW, IT CAN BE TOLD.

Last week, INQUIRER Entertainment received news that the Metro Manila Film Festival entry "Katas ng Saudi" had encountered processing problems in the post-production house RoadRunner.

Director Jose Javier Reyes said there were a lot of scratches on his movie's negative. "It's disturbing," he told the INQUIRER in a phone interview. "Almost all of my films [since "Pare Ko" in 1995] had been done in RoadRunner; this never happened before."

Manet Dayrit, RoadRunner managing director, confirmed the damage on "Katas."

"But we solved the problem by rewashing the negative," she told the INQUIRER in a phone interview. "We're very apologetic."

She said there are problems "every year" because of the increased number of films that the firm has to work on for the yearend festival.

"But everything is fine now; 'Katas' is now in the printing stage," she said. "The other [festival] movies are still in post-prod."

JOEY Reyes

MANET Dayrit

Printing for 6.5 of the MMFF movies are being done at Opticolors; the other 2.5 at SQ lab.

Dayrit acknowledged that RoadRunner's current work schedule is "very tight" at 24-7.

Crucial issue

Reyes pointed out that he had precisely submitted "Katas" "way ahead of schedule so it wouldn't get stuck in the bottleneck."

But he agreed that Dayrit's company had rectified the situation. "[I guess] the negative was substantially restored, because the Cinema Evaluation Board gave 'Katas' an A grade."

MMFF/ M3

Young stars to the rescue

By Ma. Cecilia Rodriguez
INQUIRER Mindanao

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—A WHITE-water rafting race featuring celebrities almost turned into a tragedy on Tuesday when at least 100 spectators, most of them high school students, were hurled into the raging Cagayan de Oro River after the hanging bridge they were standing on suddenly snapped.

The accident happened at around 11:30 a.m. in Mambuaya village during the first leg of the P1-million outdoor adventure competition sponsored by the Development Bank of the Philippines.

Racers, including celebrities Brad Turvey and Alyssa Alano, helped in rescuing the victims.

All those who fell were safely rescued. A Mambuaya High School student earlier reported missing was already accounted for, according to barangay officials.

According to Rupert Domingo of the Cagayan de Oro White-Water Rafting Adventure, one of the event's organizers, the spectators crowded the hanging bridge to get a good look at the celebrities who joined the boat race.

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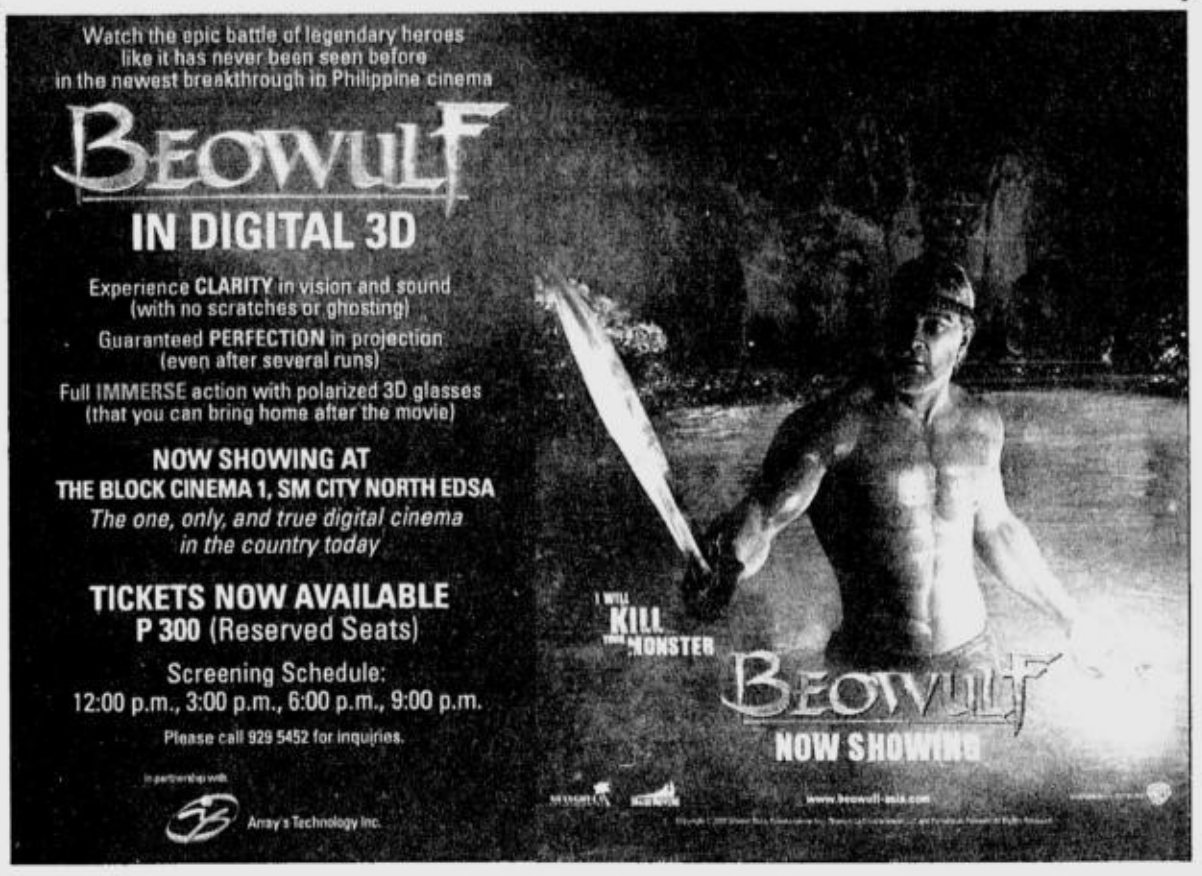

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3 GOLDEN COMPASS
4 ONE MORE CHANCE
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2 ENCHANTED
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9 BEOWULF
10 THE KINGDOM
11 DEATH PROOF
12 VHAGETS

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3 PASUKOB
4 BATANES

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4 SHIRI/ PASUKOB
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2 DEATH PROOF
3 GOLDEN COMPASS
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2 BATANES
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 ELIZABETH
5 PASUKOB
6 DEATH PROOF
7 SHIRI
8 CATACOMBS
9 VHAGETS

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2 DEATH PROOF
3 ELIZABETH
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3 THE GAME PLAN
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3 MR. MAGORIUM'S WONDER EMPORIUM
4 THE GOLDEN COMPASS

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1 HITMAN • THX
1:30 3:30 5:30 7:30 9:30

2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
11:40 2:10 4:40 7:10 9:40

3 ELIZABETH: GOLDEN AGE
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4 BEOWULF
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

5 CATACOMBS
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6 GRINDHOUSE: DEATH PROOF
1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00

7 ENCHANTED
12:50 3:00 5:10 7:20 9:30

8 indieSine: 3 DAYS of DARKNESS
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9 BATANES
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10 HOOD of HORROR
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1 GRINDHOUSE: DEATH PROOF
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2 indieSine: 3 DAYS of DARKNESS
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3 BEOWULF 12:00 2:10 4:20
HITMAN 6:35 8:20 10:00

4 HOOD of HORROR
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5 BATANES
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6 ENCHANTED
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1 CATACOMBS
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2 ELIZABETH: GOLDEN AGE
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3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
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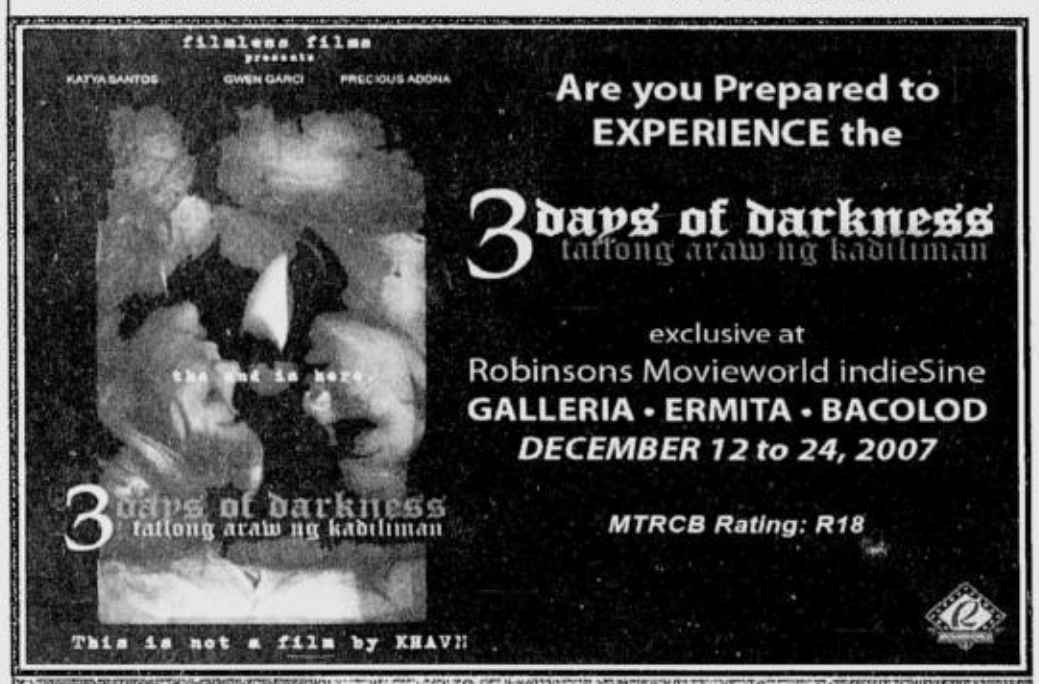

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1 EASTERN PROMISES
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2 ELIZABETH: GOLDEN AGE
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3 GRINDHOUSE: DEATH PROOF
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4 BATANES
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5 HOOD of HORROR
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6 ENCHANTED 12:30 2:30
BEOWULF 4:35 6:45 9:00

7 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
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8 CATACOMBS
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

NOVALICHES

1 PASUKOB
2 BATANES

3 HOOD of HORROR
4 THE GOLDEN COMPASS

PIONEER

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 ELIZABETH: GOLDEN AGE

3 CATACOMBS
4 GRINDHOUSE: DEATH PROOF

STA. ROSA

1 HITMAN
2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3 GAME PLAN
4 BATANES

LIPA

1 GAME PLAN
2 BOOGEYMAN 2
3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
4 HITMAN

DASMARINAS

1 HOOD of HORROR
2 GHOST SON
3 BATANES
4 THE GOLDEN COMPASS

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2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
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4 BATANES

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1 THE KINGDOM
2 FRED CLAUS
3 WE OWN THE NIGHT
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3 WE OWN THE NIGHT

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No debate...

From page M4

I saw a woman on TV who said she likes Obama but she's afraid that if he wins, he might die tragically, like Martin Luther King. Do you hear this often from other people?

No, because I feel the time is now. Because of people like Dr. Martin Luther King and his legacy, and so many other people who paved the way, we're able to have this moment now for Barack Obama. You can't move forward in life if you're thinking about all the negative things that could happen.

What is it about Obama that appealed to you?

The great thing about Barack, and he has said this, too, is that it's time, not only to change the players [but] to change the game and I think that's what so many people are hopeful and optimistic about. I like his new ideas. I am tired of the way that politics is as usual on both sides of the aisle.

How do you control your anger?

To have a spiritual root—knowing who you are, the essence of who you are so you do not allow the world and the words of the world, thoughts and perception to define who you are—that's how I carry myself. I know who I am, regardless of what is written or said, or names that I am called by critics and so on. I am rooted in my own spirituality, my sense of self and knowing that I can't be defined by the outside.

If you had only one more day to live, what would you do?

I think about that every day. I have thought about it every day since 9/11. Every morning, when I'm putting on my shoes or doing the simplest thing, I think about the folks of 9/11 who did the same thing. They got dressed, brushed their teeth, showered and did all the ordinary things that we all do. None of them came home and so that's part of my meditation: to think about that every day. I think, is this the way I'd like to spend my last day?

Before getting on a plane—I just came from Africa to be here with you all today—I thought, this is how I chose to spend my time today. If this were my last day, I chose to spend it with you. I made that choice to talk about this film and what it can represent not just for Hollywood but for this country. It was very important to me so that's how I chose to spend my day.

E-mail the columnist at rvnepales_5585@yahoo.com and read his blog, "The Nepales Report," on www.inquirerbloggers.net/nepalesreport.

MMFF...

From page M1

In any case, Reyes asserted, what happened to "Katas" had brought to light a crucial industry issue.

He explained: "There's a traffic jam every time MMFF comes around because most movie companies are dependent on RoadRunner for post-production. There are limited options. No other post-production house in the Quezon City area offers RoadRunner's one-stop' shop services."

Thus, the "Katas" fiasco was a wake-up call, Reyes said. "It could've delayed the whole festival, since the entries come in for processing at about the same time."

He stressed an urgent need for more post-prod companies.

"Competition would inspire present post-production houses to upgrade not only their facilities but also the skills of their personnel," he said.

On the other hand, "Who would invest in a multi-million production house if movie-making is not financially feasible?"

He recounted a time when RoadRunner was "as busy as Tutuban Mall."

The movie industry needs "genuine government support," he stressed. "We need concrete, long-term programs—not just awards and cash prizes."

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GOLDEN COMPASS 2:00 | 4:30 7:00 | 9:30
ELIZABETH 12:30 | 3:20 6:10 | 9:00
BEOWULF 2:25 | 7:05
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No debate about it: Oprah is talk queen

PRODUCER Oprah Winfrey and her star-director Denzel Washington: easy banter as media men listened

LOS ANGELES—IN A VOICE FAMILIAR TO millions of TV viewers around the world, a suit-clad **Oprah Winfrey** teased **Denzel Washington** about his T-shirt, shorts and sneakers: "I was trying to figure out what to wear [to this press con] and you are wearing... shorts?"

Denzel, who directs and stars in "The Great Debaters" that Oprah's Harpo Films produced, laughed and repeated the excuse he gave us earlier: He was running very late for the interview and didn't have time to change.

As planned, we had Denzel first and, later, Oprah joined the session. The hugely popular TV talk show host preferred to be interviewed with her film's star around, just as she did when we talked to her and **Halle Berry** about their TV movie, "Their Eyes Were Watching God," in 2005.

Oprah came from "halfway around the world," South Africa (where she attended crisis meetings over sexual abuse allegations in the girls' school she opened this year), to talk about "The Great Debaters." This second directing job for Denzel is a fictional story inspired by the life of **Melvin B. Tolson** (played by the actor) who inspired and coached students from a small African-American college in the early 1930s into a pioneering award-winning team. **Forest Whitaker** also stars, with a batch of fresh faces.

In this column, we feature quotes from Oprah; tomorrow, we'll print more comments from her, plus some of her easy banter with Denzel. With her chat show hosting experience, Oprah is eloquent, of course. One tends to relax in her presence; the comforting voice is her biggest plus.

After the press con, she left town to campaign for Democratic presidential hopeful **Barack Obama.**

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Ruben V. Nepales

When you act with the best of intentions and it turns into a problem, just like what happened at your school, how do you cope?

I always stop and get myself really still. I ask, "What am I supposed to get from this? I ask why is it happening to me but not in a rhetorical sense like, "Why me or why does it have to happen to me?" but, "Why am I now placed in this position?"

What can I learn from this, so that I never have to repeat whatever it is? It is a huge responsibility looking after other people's children. It is no small thing. It is not a pet project. It's a full-time job and so what I recognize is that I chose some of the wrong people to be in a leadership role. Now that I know better, I will do better and choose people differently.

What was your defining moment this year?

The defining moment for me obviously was opening the school. I haven't had a lot of time to reflect because I have been in crisis management. Also a defining moment was being able to give those girls an opportunity that I know would change them for the rest of their lives. I just put the last girl on the bus. The girls are off on their summer break. I still feel, in spite of the obstacles of this year, that it was a fantastic year. I'm looking at the bigger picture of the opportunities that will be provided in the long run, not just the problems or the crisis that we were in for the moment. I am still very proud of the fact that I did it. I know there's a lot more work to be done. I take very seriously being able to take care of other people's children, so opening the school was a great moment for me.

'I have no must-interview person because every story that gets told is a story I'm interested in'

You had the script for a long time, so what was your reaction when you saw this movie for the first time?

The film far exceeded my expectations. The script was presented to me about 10 years ago and, obviously, I read it several times over the years. About five years ago, we brought the script to the Weinstein Company and waited for the right moment because all great things take their own time. I envisioned the story and the theme as hopeful and optimistic. I had no idea that Denzel would take the words on that script and turn them into something so profound and inspirational. I was pretty overwhelmed.

When I saw the film for the first time, I was sitting about two feet behind Denzel. I was trying to cry so quietly so that he wouldn't hear me and I wouldn't go into what I call the ugly cry (laughter). I was crying and trying not to make a lot of noise. I was moved.

This movie is about a college debating team. Who would you like to debate with or would you like to see debating on your show?

A lot of attention is given to people like Denzel and movie stars who come on the show but the thing that really made my show successful for 22 seasons and counting is that we take the lives of ordinary people and tell their triumphs, defeats, sadness, joys and so forth. May I just say that you've stumped me because there isn't anybody that I can think of that I want to debate nor, at this point, anybody that I would say I must interview. Every story that gets told is a story I'm interested in hearing so I don't have a must-interview person.

Not Obama or anyone like him?

I don't have to interview Obama. I'm campaigning with him in two days so that's pretty good (laughter).

Were you on the debate team in school? And did you have a teacher who inspired you to succeed?

I was a debater in high school. My mentor was my fourth-grade teacher, Mrs. Duncan, who was just at the show. She is still wearing her hair in the same ball she had it in the fourth-grade class. The reason that I was so inspired by her is that she made me love learning. She did the thing that great teachers do. They don't just teach their class; they touch a spark, hit a nerve within the student that makes her feel like her brain just opened up and that the possibility for learning is endless. That was what happened to me in fourth grade—it made me want to be the best or made me want to strive to be the best. I learned that people appreciate excellence.

NO DEBATE/ M3

Taylor Hicks in RP

AYALA MALLS IS BRINGING IN TAYLOr Hicks, 2006 "American Idol," for a series of concerts: Dec. 18, 7 p.m. at the Glorietta 4 Park; Dec. 19, 8 p.m. at the Greenbelt 3 Park; and Dec. 20, 7 p.m. at the TriNoma Activity Center. Initially described as the least likely "Idol" with his salt-and-pepper hair and raspy voice, Hicks broke stereotypes and exceeded expectations by winning.

"AMERICAN Idol" 2006

LIVING Stars

Website: www.inquirer.net/entertainment

Editor **Emmie G. Velarde**

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TAIL TALES

RUFA MAE QUINTO

MY FRIEND JAE ELLERIA did my holiday decor at home this year. With my modest budget, Jae achieved the color combination and style that I wanted. I told him that the ornaments should blend well with the interior design. The tree, which I bought four years ago, stands in a corner in the dining area, but I can also see it from the sofa in the living room. Christmas is my favorite time of year. I get so excited every time I look at the tree and lights. I have an entry in the Metro Manila Film Festival, "Desperadas," so I'll spend Christmas Eve riding a float in the annual parade. But I'll make sure to spend Christmas Day with my family.

Bayani San Diego Jr.
PHOTO COURTESY OF RUSTOM PADILLA

FAVORITE NOOKS

YASMIEN KURDI

I HAVE TWO SHIH TZUS: CHITO and Charming. I named Chito after the lead singer of Parokya ni Edgar, Chito Miranda. It's because I love the bands Parokya and Kamikazee, and they are my neighbors. Once, I was calling Chito the dog and Chito the rocker, who was passing by, looked at me. I had to explain to him that I was calling my pet. I got Chito the pet from *Direk* Louie Ignacio's friend. I named Charming after my character in the old soap opera "Bakekang." I saw her in a Tiendesitas pet store and noticed that she moves like Betty Boop, very flirty. They give me love and care. Even if I get home early the following morning, they wait up, happy and excited to see me.

Bayani San Diego Jr.
PHOTO BY AUGUST DE LA CRUZ

STARS FOR OTHERS

CRYING CHAIR
Sharon Stone wipes her tears while giving a speech during the Cinema Against AIDS event in Dubai on Monday. Proceeds of the gala dinner and auction will go to amfAR, a foundation for Aids research headed by Stone. AFP

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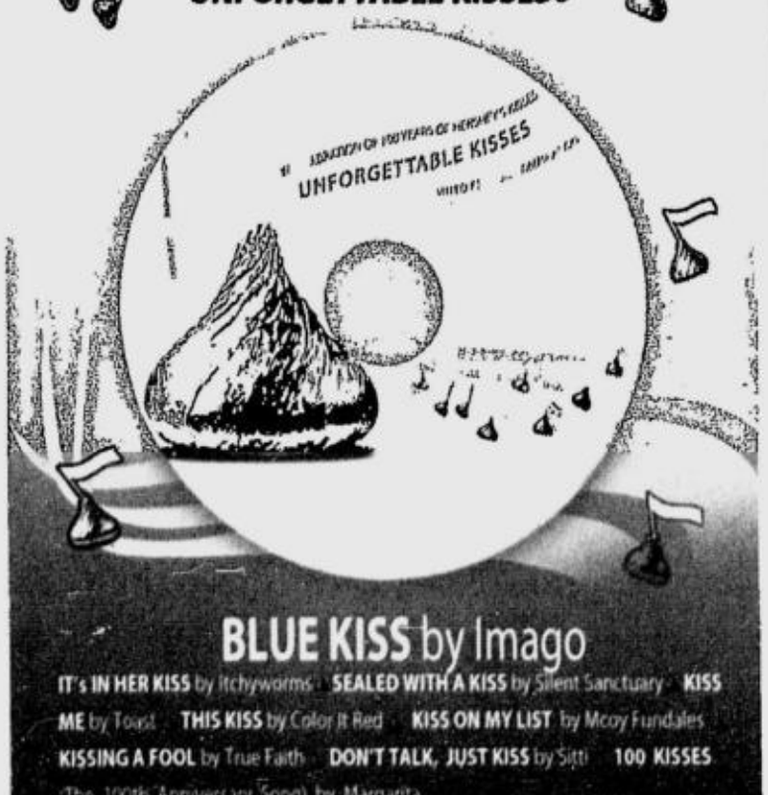

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MMTA

METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE

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1 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE
2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE
4 ENCHANTED / THE KINGDOM
PREMIERE
GRIND HOUSE : DEATH PROOF

Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
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Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216
1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE
3 HOOD OF HORROR
4 KINGDOM

Stormall
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150
3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
4 HOOD OF HORROR
5

Metropolis Star
www.ticketnet.com.ph
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1 HOOD OF HORROR
2 BATANES
3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
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Theatres
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2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
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3
4

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6 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE
7 THE KINGDOM
8 RESERVED
9 ONE MORE CHANCE
10 BATANES / PASUKOB

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2 KIKAY
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2 GRACIA
3 HITMAN
4 BATANES
5 30 DAYS OF NIGHT

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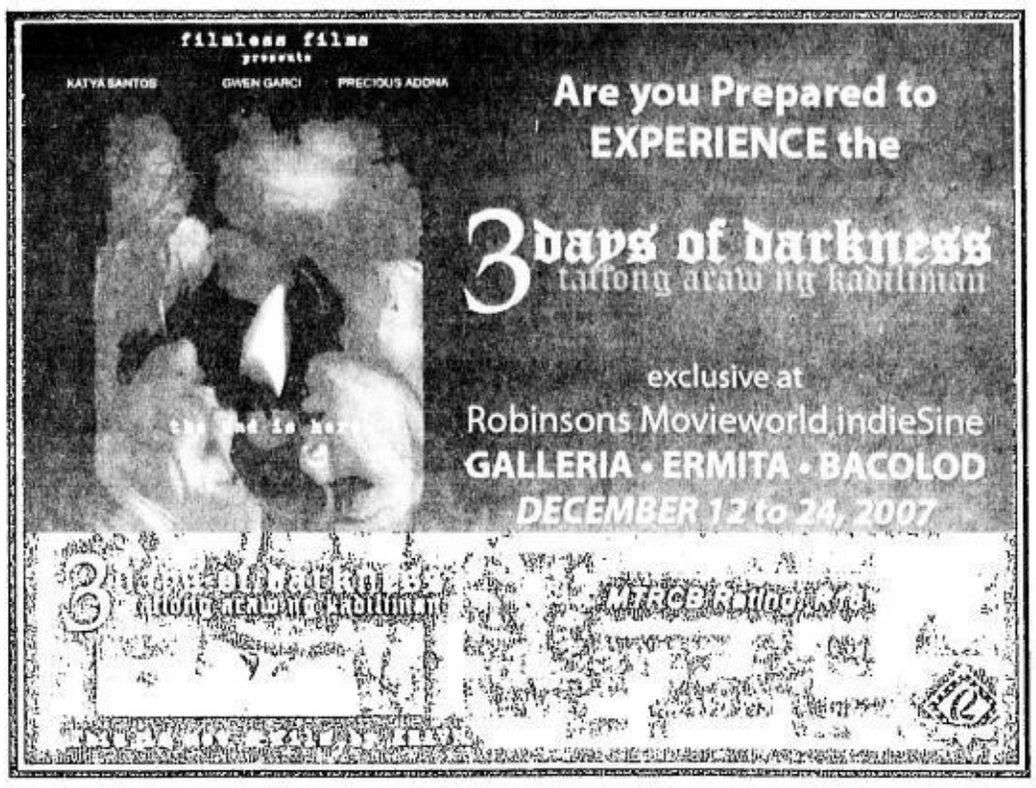
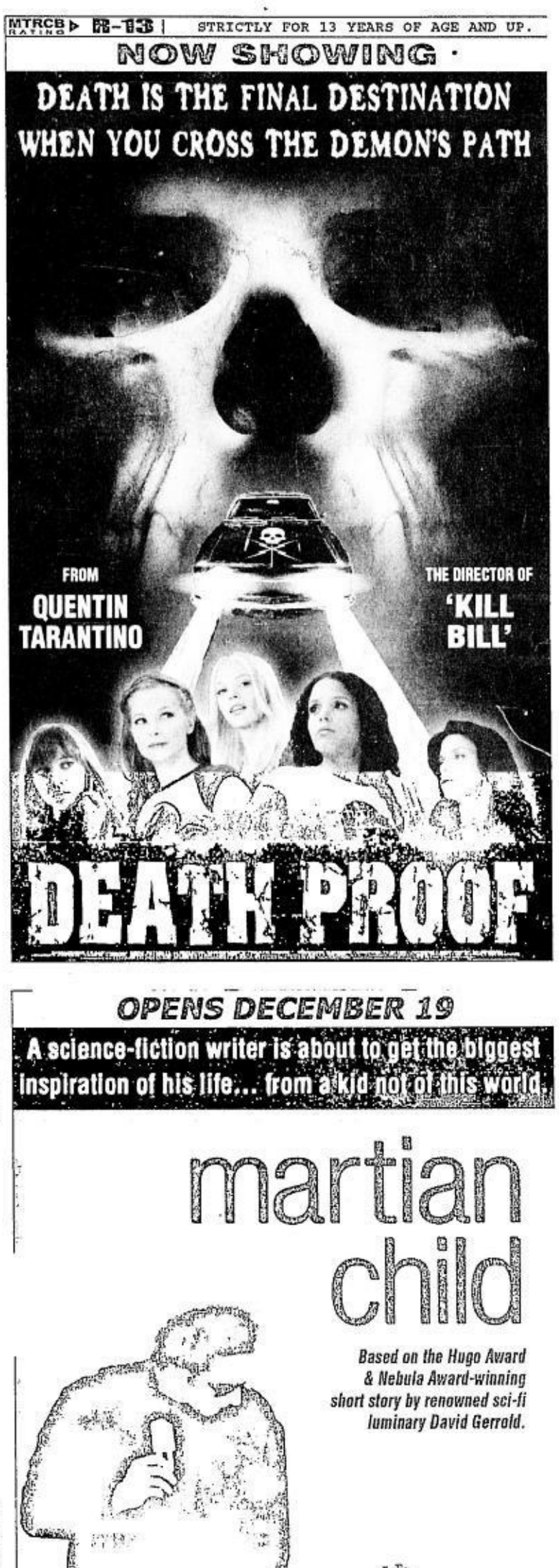


LIVING

ARNELL IGNACIO

I RECOMMEND "401 Killer Marketing Tactics: To Increase Sales, Maximize Profits and Stomp Your Competition" by Tom Feltenstein. We need to read books like these before we go into any business venture—whether big or small. It really pays to fill your mind with tried-and-tested formulas that have worked for other people in the past. These tips are free and once you absorb them, nobody can take that knowledge away from you. We should always be open to learning. Information is power. Unfortunately, some people mistake being well-read with being arrogant. It saddens and worries me that people don't read as much as before. *Bayani San Diego Jr.*



OOKS

MICHAEL SANDEJAS (Director, "Tulad ng Dati")

"WARRIORS OF GOD: Richard the Lionheart and Saladin in the Third Crusade" is a vivid account of the third crusade to free the city of Jerusalem. It also follows the parallel lives of King Richard the Lionheart and Saladin, the Kurdish Sultan and the bloody yet honorable war they waged against each other.

Here I found the basis for the film "Kingdom of Heaven" and realized how Hollywood took too much cinematic license yet fell short of the real drama.

The book at times seems fantastic, creating doubt about its historical accuracy despite a list of references. But this challenged me to read more about these events and their relevance to our times. *Marinel R. Cruz*

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1 ELIZABETH MTRCB. PG-13
3 ELIZABETH MTRCB. PG-13
2 GOLDEN COMPASS MTRCB. PG-13
4 ENCHANTED MTRCB. GP
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THE GOLDEN COMPASS PG13 2:20,4:50,7:20,9:50	ELIZABETH THE GOLDEN AGE PG13 1:00,3:30,6:00,8:30	THE GOLDEN COMPASS PG13 12:20,2:50,5:20, 7:50,10:20
THE KINGDOM R13 12:30,2:55,5:20, 7:45,10:10	DEATH PROOF R13 1:30,3:40,5:50, 8:00,10:10	ELIZABETH THE GOLDEN AGE PG13 12:30,3:00,5:30, 8:00,10:30

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Nicole Kidman is Mrs. Coulter in "THE GOLDEN COMPASS"

New Line's pricey $180M fantasy epic "*The Golden Compass*" opened at #1 at the U.S. Box-office from 3,528 theaters.

The overseas box-office was spectacular. "Compass" grossed $55 million from 25 international territories in its day-and-date release.

The international box-office was twice that of the U.S. box-office. With the UK debut of $1.9 million, out-grossing *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*'s opening day in 2005, The Golden Compass ranked #1 in seven territories: U.K., Spain, France, Finland, Norway, Thailand and, the Philippines.

ADVT.

~VARIETY / Sunday Dec.9, 2007

AT THE CINEMAS

THX

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GLORIETTA 4	1 ENCHANTED	2 THE KINGDOM	3 THX ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 GONE BABY GONE	5 BATANES	6 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	7 DEATH PROOF
GREENBELT 1	1 PAPER DOLLS		2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	
GREENBELT 3	1 THX THE GOLDEN COMPASS GUARANTEED SEATS		2 THX ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE GUARANTEED SEATS	
	3 DEATH PROOF GUARANTEED SEATS	4 GONE BABY GONE GUARANTEED SEATS	5 EASTERN PROMISES GUARANTEED SEATS	
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX THE GOLDEN COMPASS		2 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN COMPASS	
	3 DEATH PROOF	4 CATACOMB	5 THE KINGDOM	
AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	2 THE GAME PLAN	3 FRED CLAUS	4 EASTERN PROMISES
MARKET! MARKET!	1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS		2 DEATH PROOF	
	3 HOOD OF HORROR	4 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE	5 CATACOMB	
TRINOMA	1 BATANES	2 DEATH PROOF	3 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE GUARANTEED SEATS	4 HOOD OF HORROR GUARANTEED SEATS
	5 ENCHANTED	6 CATACOMB	7 THX THE GOLDEN COMPASS GUARANTEED SEATS	

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Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; 772 1860
Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc. 324
Market! Market! - 886 7519
TriNoma - 901 3000

glorietta
Urban Beats featuring Taken By Cars and Mojofly
November 30; 6pm; Glorietta 4 Park

GREENBELT
Bossa Christmas with Guarana and The Company
November 30; 8pm; Greenbelt 3 Park

ALABANG TOWN CENTER
Christmas Cantata Series Featuring Parish of St. James The Great
December 1; 6pm; Town Plaza

AYALA CENTER CEBU
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Repertory Philippines presents FIDDLER ON THE ROOF
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Ayala Museum
WATER IS THE MEDIUM by Juvenal Sanso
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For more info, pls. call 757-7117 to 21 loc. 41 or email museum.inquiry@ayalamuseum.org

Tri Noma
SEUSSICAL THE MUSICAL: The Cat in the Hat Live Show
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Rhythm Academy: Sam Concepcion with the Augustinian Larks
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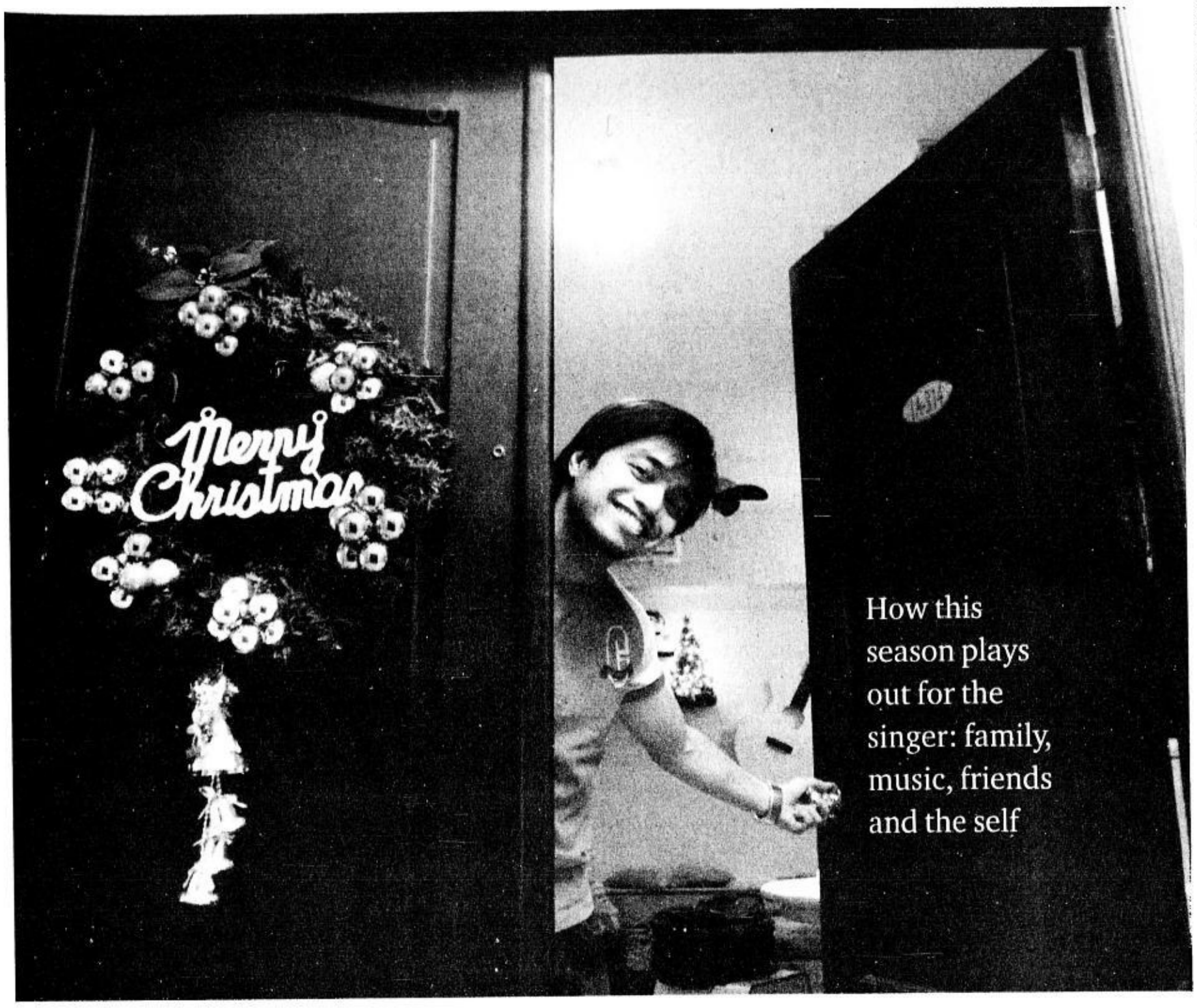
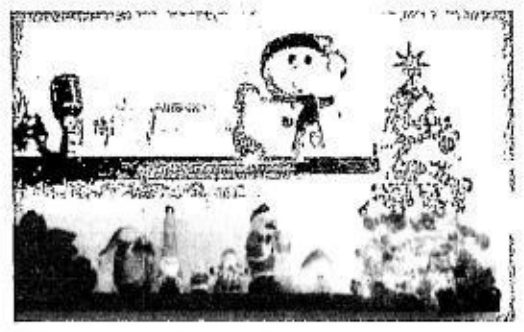
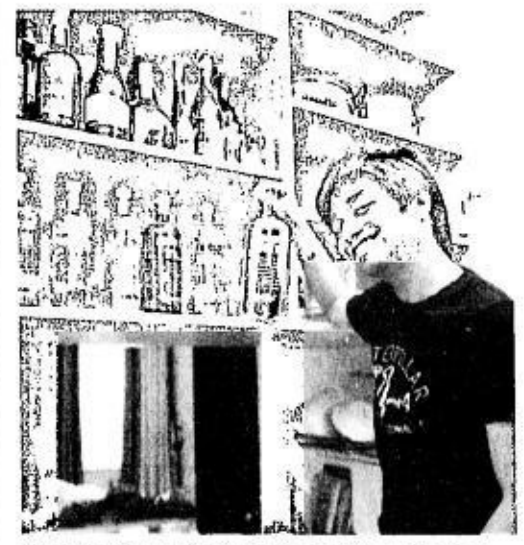


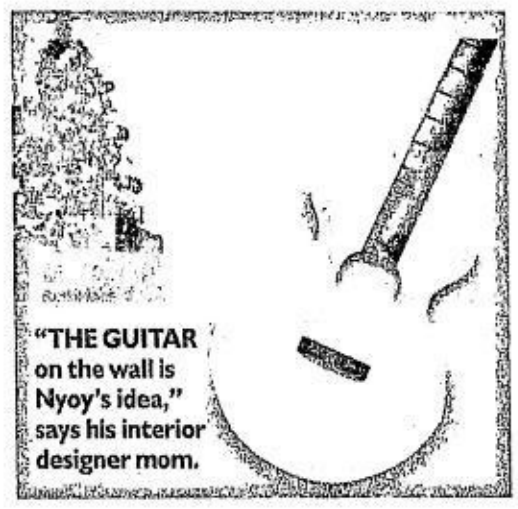
How this season plays out for the singer: family, music, friends and the self



CHRISTMAS decor add color to his otherwise two-toned home.



NYOY shows off his vodka bottle collection.



"THE GUITAR on the wall is Nyoy's idea," says his interior designer mom.

STEEL figure of basketball, his favorite sport

Minimalism works for Nyoy

HOME BODY

By Marinel R. Cruz
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan

SINGER NYOY VOLANTE admits that preoccupation with his new condominium unit in Parañaque City helped him cope with the pain of his breakup with girlfriend Nina.

Nyoy and Nina announced their separation in June, but kept details of the breakup private.

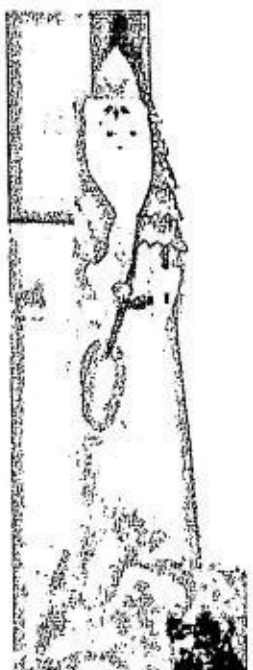
"We're okay; we're on speaking terms, though we hardly see each other now," Nyoy told Living Stars last week during a visit to his two-bedroom condo. "The split-up wasn't easy for me. Good thing I was busy working on the construction and furnishing of the house."

Designer mom

From an apartment near his parents' house—also in Parañaque City—Nyoy moved in to this unit in April. He said Nina accompanied him on house-hunting trips earlier, but that she never got to see his new home. There are no pictures of Nina on any of the counter tops or shelves.

Nyoy said his parents and siblings helped him "move on," and then "move in" to the new crib.

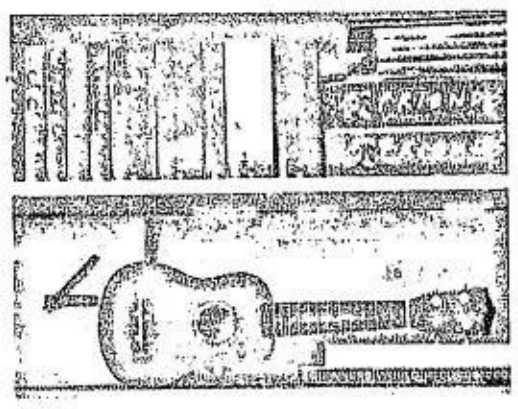
Mom Evangeline, an interior designer, is responsible for the minimalist look. "[Notice that] the walls of this unit are bare. There are no moldings, no architrays. *Puro* corners *pa*," she explained. "The key to good arrangement is furniture that fit perfectly—not too small and not too big. Everything here is custom-made—sofa, dining table and cabinets."



A PIECE from his mom's Christmas collection.

2 colors max

Color coordination is also important, added Nyoy's mom. "We agreed to use just white and brown. The only reason you're seeing other colors here now is because it's Christmas time."



ASIDE from guitars, Nyoy also collects DVD copies of his favorite TV series, "Friends."

CDs of Nyoy's favorite artists are Santa's gift to the singer this year.

Big favorite

Nyoy said the Christmas ornaments were brought in from the nearby Volante home. He simply picked a few pieces that he liked from his mom's collection. The gift-bearing Santa Claus that sits in a corner of the living area is a big favorite.

His incredibly compact work area features a keyboard, personal computer, recording equipment, microphone, speakers, mixers and synthesizers.

"Here is where I do everything that's related to music. I record, arrange, invite other musicians over. I did a lot of my commercial jingles here," said the singer, a regular performer at the Bagaberde Grill and Restaurant branches in Pasay and Pasig.

Neat freak

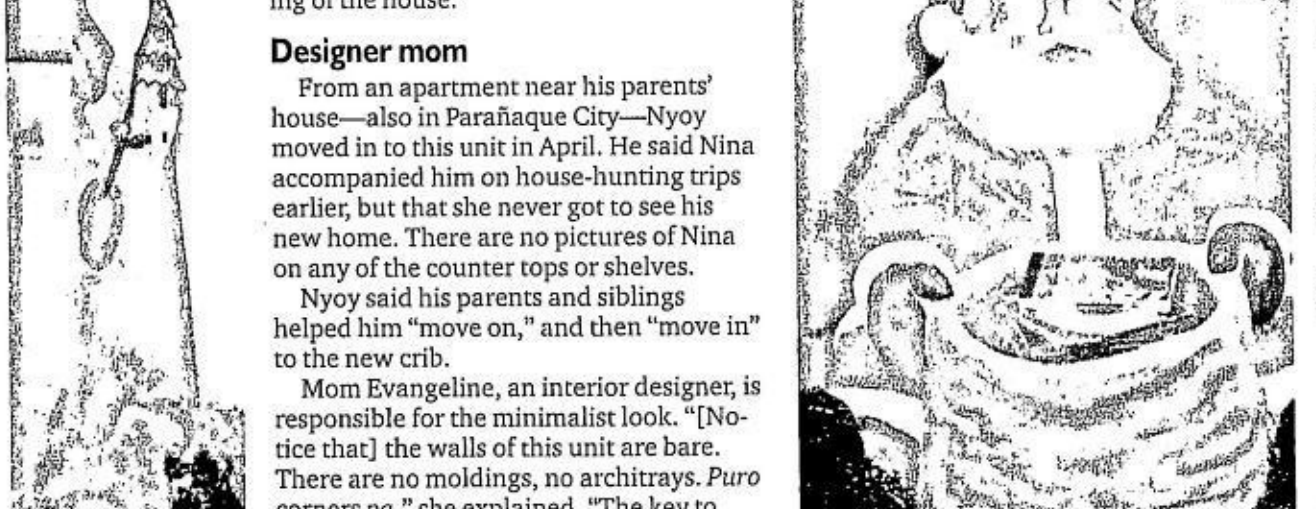
A self-confessed neat freak, Nyoy makes sure his clothes are arranged according to color and style. He has a thing for exposed wires, so he personally does all the drilling and wiring. He also can't leave his room without making up the bed. "I do this because I have a clear picture of how my house should look," Nyoy explained.

While her son was busy with our photographer, Evangeline told Living Stars that if she had her way, she'd have more color on the walls and give the bathroom more character. "But I could do only so much. I just made sure that all his instructions were followed," she said.

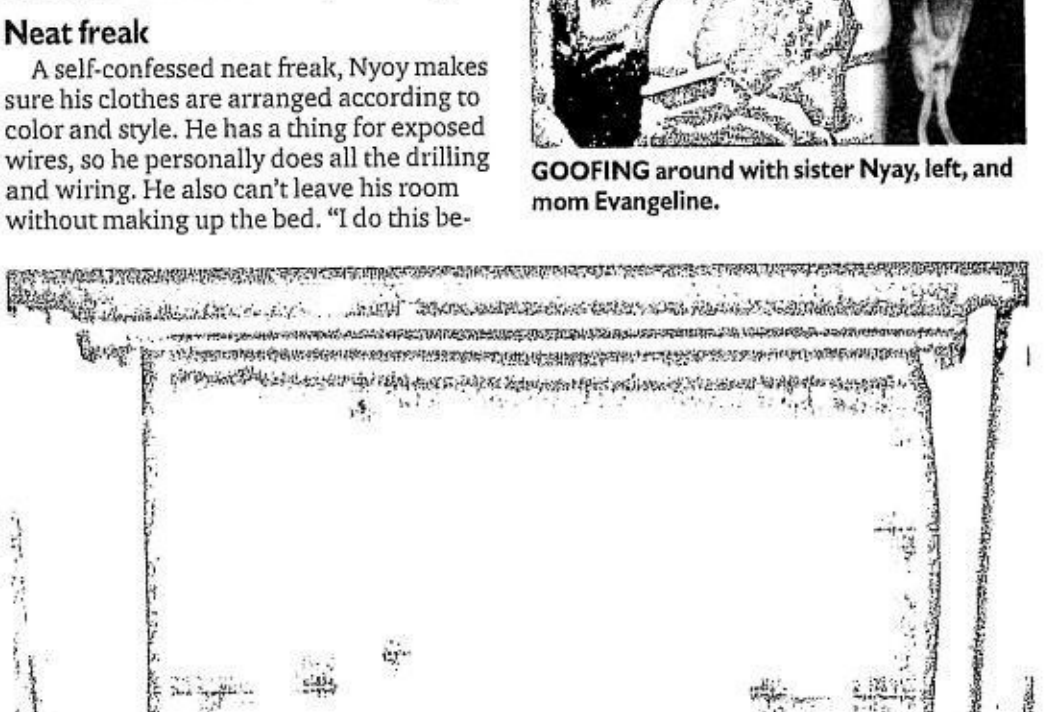
From his bedroom door, Nyoy asked: "Ma, are the flowers in here really necessary?"

"See?" Evengeline said, rolling her eyes.

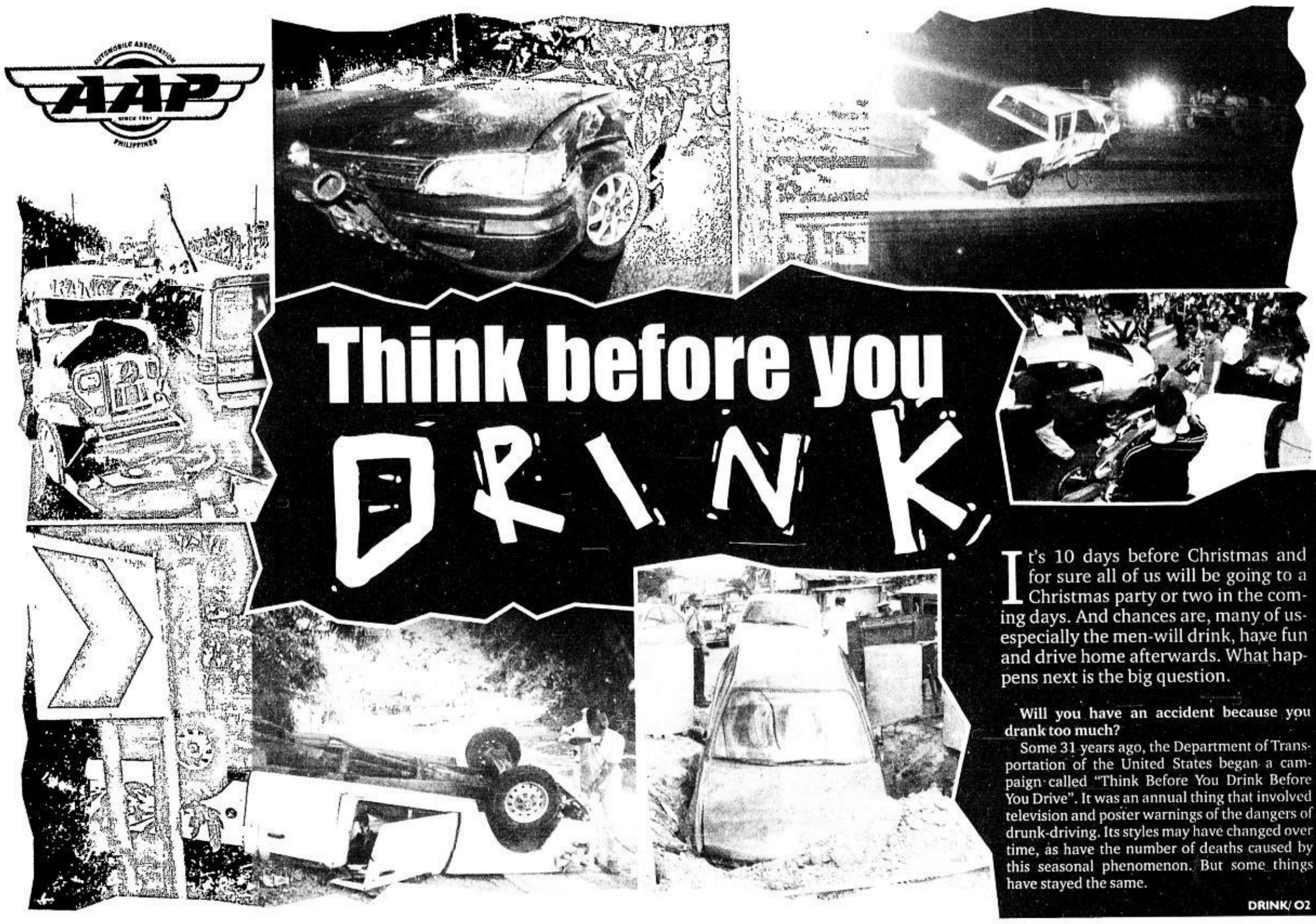
GOOFING around with sister Nyay, left, and mom Evangeline.



THE WORK area is incredibly compact. The shelves contain not only books, but also his collection of board games and DVDs.



"NO ONE disturbs me when I'm in my bedroom," the singer says.



Think before you DRINK

It's 10 days before Christmas and for sure all of us will be going to a Christmas party or two in the coming days. And chances are, many of us-especially the men-will drink, have fun and drive home afterwards. What happens next is the big question.

Will you have an accident because you drank too much?

Some 31 years ago, the Department of Transportation of the United States began a campaign called "Think Before You Drink Before You Drive". It was an annual thing that involved television and poster warnings of the dangers of drunk-driving. Its styles may have changed over time, as have the number of deaths caused by this seasonal phenomenon. But some things have stayed the same.

DRINK/ 02

DRIVEN. TESTED. VOTED.

CAR OF THE YEAR

C30

SPORTS COUPÉ

Other awards received by the Volvo C30 are:
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Making Motoring Fun
By Gus Lagman

Top 10 motoring traps in Metro Manila

TRAFFIC SIGNS ARE DESIGNED TO guide motorists and ensure the smooth flow of vehicles on the road. In Metro Manila, however, some signs have become so confusing or ill-placed that one would think that they are meant to be "trap-fic" signs placed by corrupt policemen to trap unsuspecting motorists.

I have listed here 10 areas where such signs exist. I did not make this list; I got them from friends who want to warn motorists about unscrupulous cops who compete with carolers for money during Christmas season.

Beware of these traps. I have to say, though, that it's been some time since I received this list so there may already be some changes. I just hope they're all for the better. Here they are:

1. Quirino Avenue in Plaza Dilao, Paco, Manila. Moving east, a lot of motorists, including the one who e-mailed this to me, notice a solid white line separating the left-turning vehicles from those going straight. There's usually heavy traffic in the area and chances are you will be following dozens of cars. Unless you're familiar with the place, you would not notice that the broken white line is not broken anymore and once you cross either to the left or the right, the police up ahead will catch you for swerving.

2. Shaw Boulevard in front of Jose Rizal College. Pass by this place in the morning and you'll notice that it's hard to see the stoplight if you are coming from Kalentong towards Edsa. Many drivers have been apprehended here for unintentionally beating the red light.

3. Quirino Avenue corner Osmeña Highway. If you are going west towards Roxas Boulevard, always use the middle and outermost lanes-or be prepared to be charged for swerving.

4. Bambang street corner Rizal Avenue in Manila. This is a one-way street but the sign is too small or posi-

TRAPS/ O3

Unless you're familiar with the place, you would not notice that the broken white line is not broken anymore and once you cross either to the left or the right, the police up ahead will catch you for swerving

DRINK

From page O1

And while the posters and TV advertisements might not be as memorable, it seems as many as 20,000 Americans could be extremely thankful for them. That is the number of fatalities estimated to have been avoided over the years, thanks in large part to the campaign.

Varied tactics

In trying to bring drunk-driving deaths down over the years, the US DOT deployed a variety of tactics. In the early days, drunk-driving was not seen as quite the anti-social activity it is today.

The early campaigns used soft sell to address this. 1976's advertisement showed, to a soundtrack of "Roll Out The Barrel", a woman being carried into an ambulance on a stretcher.

Perhaps it says something about the times, but the trend in the early '80s was quite clearly to appeal to self-interest. "Don't drink and drive because here's how it will affect you," the ads said. "You will lose your driving license, you will have to beg your relatives for a lift, you will have to wait for two hours for a cab."

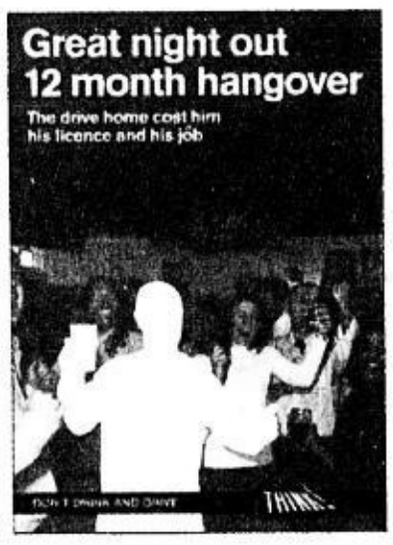
It even went for the holy grail of the '80s-the pocket. "Your car insurance would double with a drunk-driving conviction," the ads said, including the memorable line from a drunk-driver seeking a new policy: "But that's more than I paid for the car!"

But by the '90s, the hard sell competed for public attention. With documentary soap operas and gory hospital dramas like ER, and media doing their best at every turn to shock, the campaigns pulled no punches. So a curly-haired little girl overhears her mother ask her father: "How am I supposed to explain you killed a little boy?"

In another advertisement, shown in 1992, the camera simply looked down on a road accident victim almost as if in an out-of-body experience while paramedics tried unsuccessfully to revive her.

And then there was David, being fed liquid food spoonful by spoonful by his mother, while the soundtrack is of his friends encouraging him to have another pint. "Come on Dave, just one more," both his friends and his mother say.

By 1998, the campaign fully embraced reality TV, showing pictures purporting to be from an accident that happened today. "We'll show you details of another accident tomorrow. Make sure it's not you," it says.



Local efforts

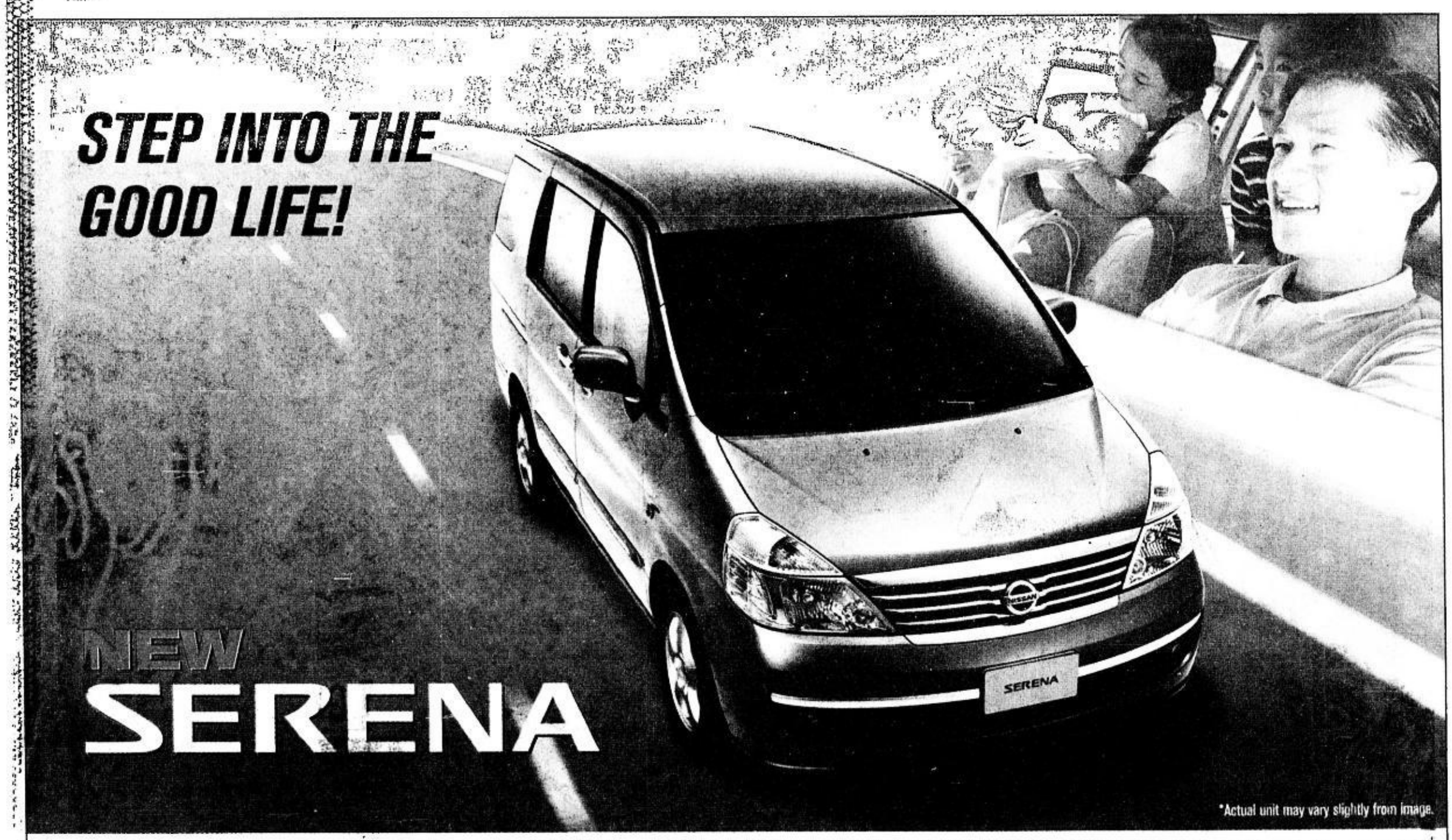
In the Philippines, the government has not done anything substantial to prevent drunk-driving.

Recently, though, Senate President Manuel Villar filed proposed measures that would increase the penalty for motorists caught driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Villar explained that existing laws on car accidents involving drunk drivers are lenient, treating such accidents as caused by reckless imprudence and not by deliberate act. A law must be in place to provide stricter penalties for accidents caused by drunk drivers, he said.

"We want to minimize acci-

DRINK/ O2



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AAP NEWS

Give peace of mind as your gift this Christmas

What gift can P500 buy these days?

If you really care for your loved one, you might want to spend your money on something that can be used 24 hours a day, seven days a week-for the entire year!

We're referring to an AAP membership which brings with it a whole year of worry-free driving for your loved one. For P500, you can give your wife, girlfriend, son or daughter all the benefits of an AAP Associate Membership.

> Aside from AAP's popular and reliable emergency roadside assistance program, an Associate Member is presented with a tremendous host of benefits

Like AAP's regular membership, an associate membership carries great offerings and exceptional values. Aside from AAP's popular and reliable emergency roadside assistance program, an Associate Member is presented with a tremendous host of benefits. A P200,000 personal accident insurance, free LTO registration assistance, free traffic investigation assistance, discounts on ambulance services, anti-theft security glass etching services, and motor vehicle insurance discounts are just some of the things one enjoys when he or she becomes an AAP Associate Member.

AAP's Associate Membership can likewise help save you money on almost everything from hotel accommodations and restaurant bills to car repair and auto accessories through the numerous slashes off the prices of our nationwide network of business partners. Get the best rate for various items like our very own AAP/Outlast maintenance-free batteries, Goodyear tires, and even travel and property insurance services. Plus, enjoy savings at over 150,000 locations worldwide through the Show Your Card & Save network of the American Automobile Association (AAA),

PEACE/ O5

From page O2

dents and deaths due to accidents caused by persons driving any kind of motor vehicle while under the influence of alcoholic beverages or drugs," he explained.

Under the measure, it shall be unlawful for any person to drive or operate any motor vehicle while under the influence of alcoholic beverages or drugs. A person shall be considered under the influence of alcoholic beverages if it shall be established that he has a blood alcohol concentration level of 0.6 percent or more.

For the first offense, a fine of P1,000 and a one-year suspension of the driver's license shall be meted out. For the second and all subsequent offenses, the violator faces a fine of P5,000 and a five-year revocation of his license. If during the suspension period, a violation is committed again, the offender shall be sentenced to one to five years imprisonment.

Important points

Even without the proposed law,

DRINK/ O6

Top 10 motoring traps in Metro Manila

From page O2

tioned too high for anybody to see. Many of my friends have been caught entering this street the wrong way.

5. Reina Regente in Binondo. For those hunting for bargains this Christmas, beware of the stoplight right in front of Meisic Mall. Never make a left turn there-or else! The spot is being guarded by a combination of MMDA blue boys and Manila Police brown boys.

6. Corner of Aurora Boulevard and Edsa. If you're coming from AAP, don't you ever turn right on Edsa. MMDA blue boys will apprehend you and there's no use arguing that you never saw a no-right-turn sign.

7. Edsa southbound as you approach Buendia (Gil Puyat Sr. Ave.). An AAP member e-mailed me that as you approach this fork, you may not notice a "No Swerving" sign which is located in such a way that it don't see it until you pass it. MMDA traffic officers stand in the middle to block the sign so that unsuspecting motorists who decide to change lanes to avoid traffic fail to see it. In fact, in a shaded area on the left hand side lane that goes under the flyover to Rockwell, MMDA officers sit waiting for "swerving" motorists. The other notorious location is the flyover to Ortigas from the northbound lane of Edsa, where the "No Swerving" sign is obscurely posted at the MRT foothold on your left as you approach the flyover. Warning signs should be posted at least 500 meters before the fork and every 100 meters before to warn motorists of the risks ahead. Otherwise, traffic laws become "punitive" rather than "corrective" and do not protect the public from unscrupulous traffic officers.

8. Ayala Avenue corner Makati Avenue. There used to be a "No Right Turn On Red Signal" (NRTORS) sign here but it's gone now. If you're making a right turn when the traffic light is red., beware! There's a bunch of Mapsa yellow boys waiting just around the corner. Some of my friends have experienced that no amount of arguing would stop those cops from issuing them a ticket.

> Those barriers, as well as the U-turn concrete barriers, should be lighted at night or at the very least should have reflectorized markings

9. Macapagal Avenue and Edsa Extension. This is the road going to the Mall of Asia. Again, the NRTORS sign is either too small or so inconspicuous that many hurried motorists have unwittingly violated it.

10. Quezon Avenue intersection going to Edsa. There are two 2-lane roads with a center island and a sign to segregate the Public Utility Vehicles (left) from the private vehicles (right). Try to pass there at night. The sign is barely readable from afar. The sign can only be read when you've already entered either of the lanes. If you entered the wrong lane, the next thing you'll see is an MMDA enforcer flagging you down. Numerous private vehicles that entered the PUV lane have been apprehended, but apparently, jeepneys and other PUVs passing the private car lane are never stopped.

I believe there are more areas in Metro Manila and in major cities in the provinces that can be included in this list. If you know of some, e-mail them to me at info@aap.org.ph and I will include them in AAP's website as a warning to our members.

About the newly installed barriers along Edsa: I could not believe what MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando said during a TV interview about the accidents caused by the newly installed barriers along Edsa. He said that since nobody has died anyway, then

TRAPS/ O5

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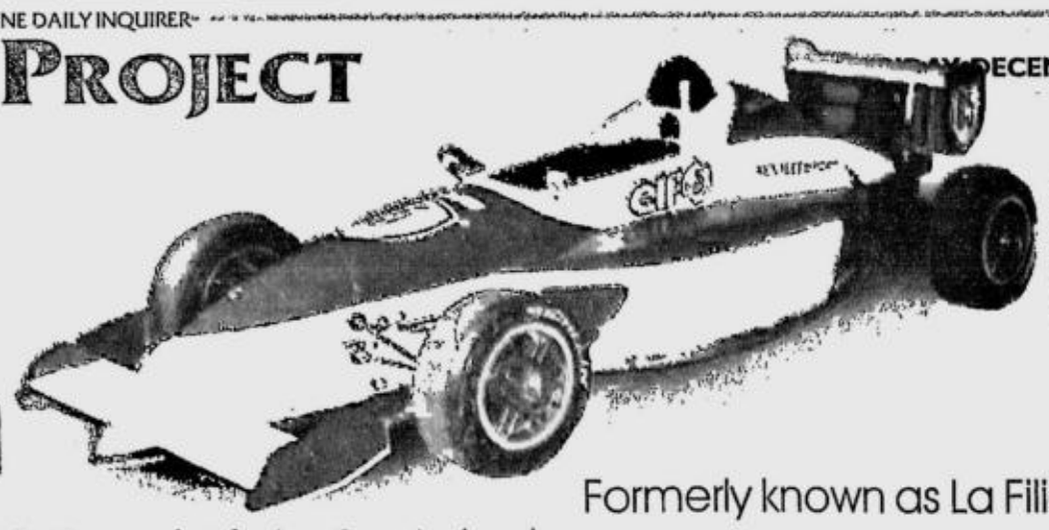
MOTOR SPORTS

AAP invests in Auto Sport Academy Asia



One of the 24 Formula Campus cars of the Autosport Academy.

Filipino drivers dreaming of competing in Formula One will soon have access to the best formula racing school in the world.

The Automobile Association Philippines is investing in the Auto Sport Academy in Johor, Malaysia, a facility that would provide open-wheel-racing education to aspiring drivers in Asia starting July next year.

AAP motor sports chair Mandy Eduque said Auto Sport Academy Asia is a small version of the school which goes by the same name in France. "Auto Sport Academy was formed as a bridge to connect karting to formula racing," he said. "There is really a need for an intermediate stage to which karters could go before they make the jump to formula racing."

The establishment of Auto Sport Academy Asia was approved by the members of the FIA Asia Zone at a meeting in Johor, Malaysia last September. The FIA (Federation Internationale de l'Automobile) is the Paris-based organization that governs motor sports worldwide, including Formula One, the World Rally Championship and the 24 Hours of Le Mans.

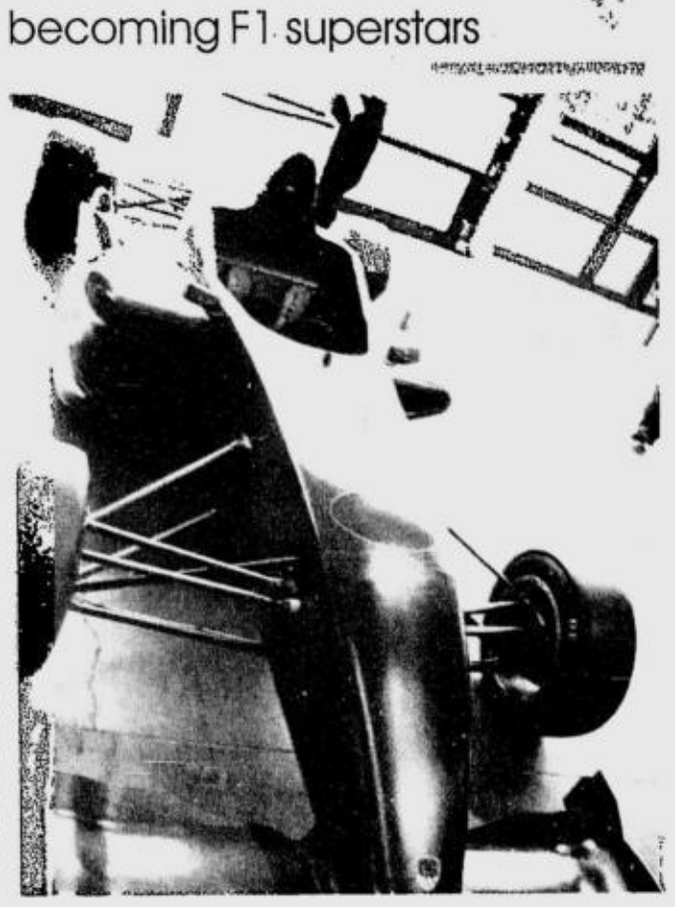
Eduque pointed out that Filipino karters are second to none. Proof of this is the recent victory of Marlon Stockinger in the World Rotax Championships and the triumphs of Michelle Bumgarner in Asian Karting.

He noted, however, that Filipino karters are forced to proceed to touring car racing after their karting careers due to the absence of a school that would prepare them for formula racing. "This is what the Auto Sport Academy is all about," he said.

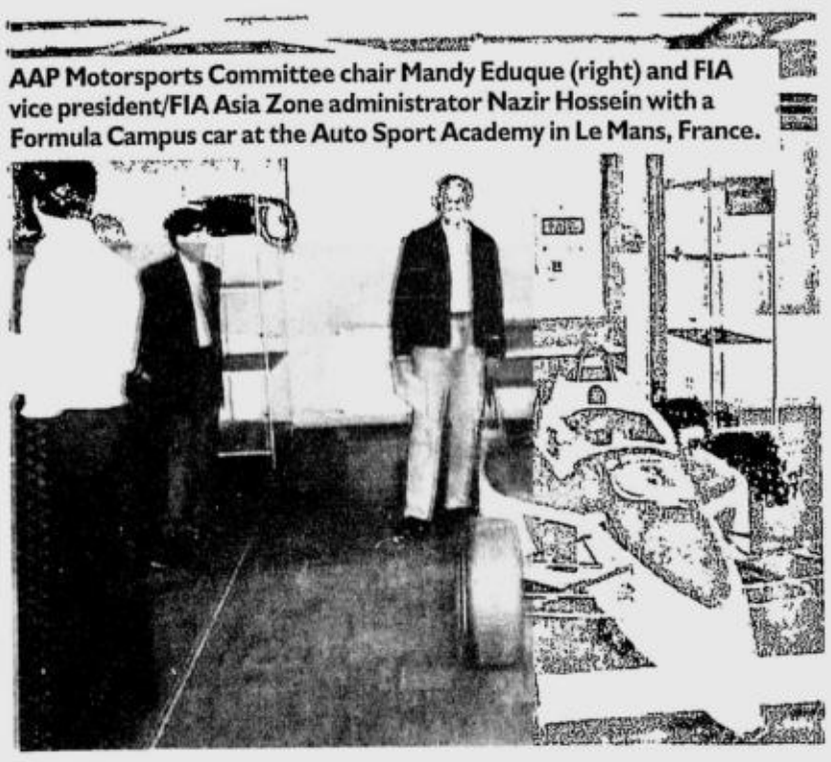
Eduque pointed out that Auto Sport Academy Asia will provide not just racing education but comprehensive teaching that includes subjects they normally take in traditional schools. "Until its creation, budding drivers thought that they had to choose between their studies and motor sports. Auto Sport Academy offers drivers the option of testing their sporting talents while continuing their studies," Eduque said.

AUTO/ 06

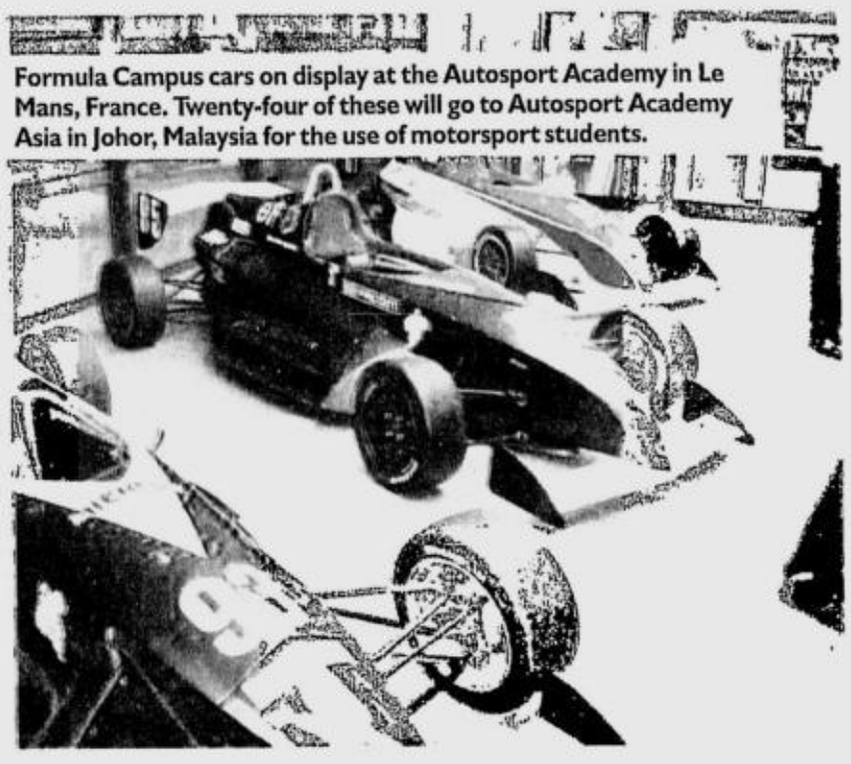
Formerly known as La Filière, Auto Sport Academy was created by French oil company Elf to discover new talents. About 40 to 50 young drivers enroll at the school every year, with many of them, such as Alain Prost, becoming F1 superstars



The AAP will sponsor two Formula Campus cars, like this one, for the Autosport Academy Asia.



AAP Motorsports Committee chair Mandy Eduque (right) and FIA vice president/FIA Asia Zone administrator Nazir Hossein with a Formula Campus car at the Auto Sport Academy in Le Mans, France.



Formula Campus cars on display at the Autosport Academy in Le Mans, France. Twenty-four of these will go to Autosport Academy Asia in Johor, Malaysia for the use of motorsport students.

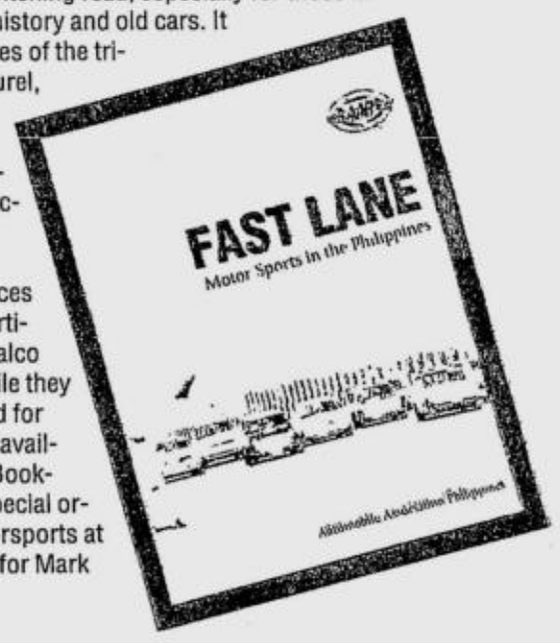
AAP NEWS

TOYOTA-AAP PARTNERSHIP FOR ROAD SAFETY

Toyota Motor Philippines Corp (TMP) and the Automobile Association Philippines (AAP) continued their partnership as they signed a memorandum of understanding covering the implementation of road safety projects. In particular, TMP and AAP, in cooperation with the National Center for Transportation Studies, are drafting the plans that will make the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City a road traffic safety model. The MOU was signed by (seated from left) TMP senior executive vice president Dr. David Go, TMP president Hiroshi Ito, AAP president Gus Lagman, and AAP vice president Johnny Angeles. Witnessing the event are (standing from left) TMP vice president Rommel Gutierrez, TMP first vice president Jose Ma. Aligada, and AAP directors Angel Kanapi and Mandy Eduque.

Give a Fast Lane for Christmas

Still looking for the perfect gift for your dad? Give him Fast Lane and he will enjoy a trip down memory lane, reminiscing the glory days of Philippine motor sports. Fast Lane is a coffeetable book published by the Automobile Association Philippines. Through rare photographs and crisp writing by motoring journalist Junep Ocampo, the book takes the reader as far back as the 1950s when car racing began in this country. The book is an enlightening read, especially for those interested in popular history and old cars. It brings back memories of the triumphs of Dodjie Laurel, Pocholo Ramirez, Dante Silverio, Eddie Marcelo and other pioneers of car racing. And it contains never-before-published photos of places such as an empty Ortigas Center and Meralco Avenue in Pasig while they were still being used for racing. Fast Lane is available at all National Bookstore outlets. For special orders, call AAP Motorsports at 723-0808 and look for Mark Desales.



ROAD TIPS

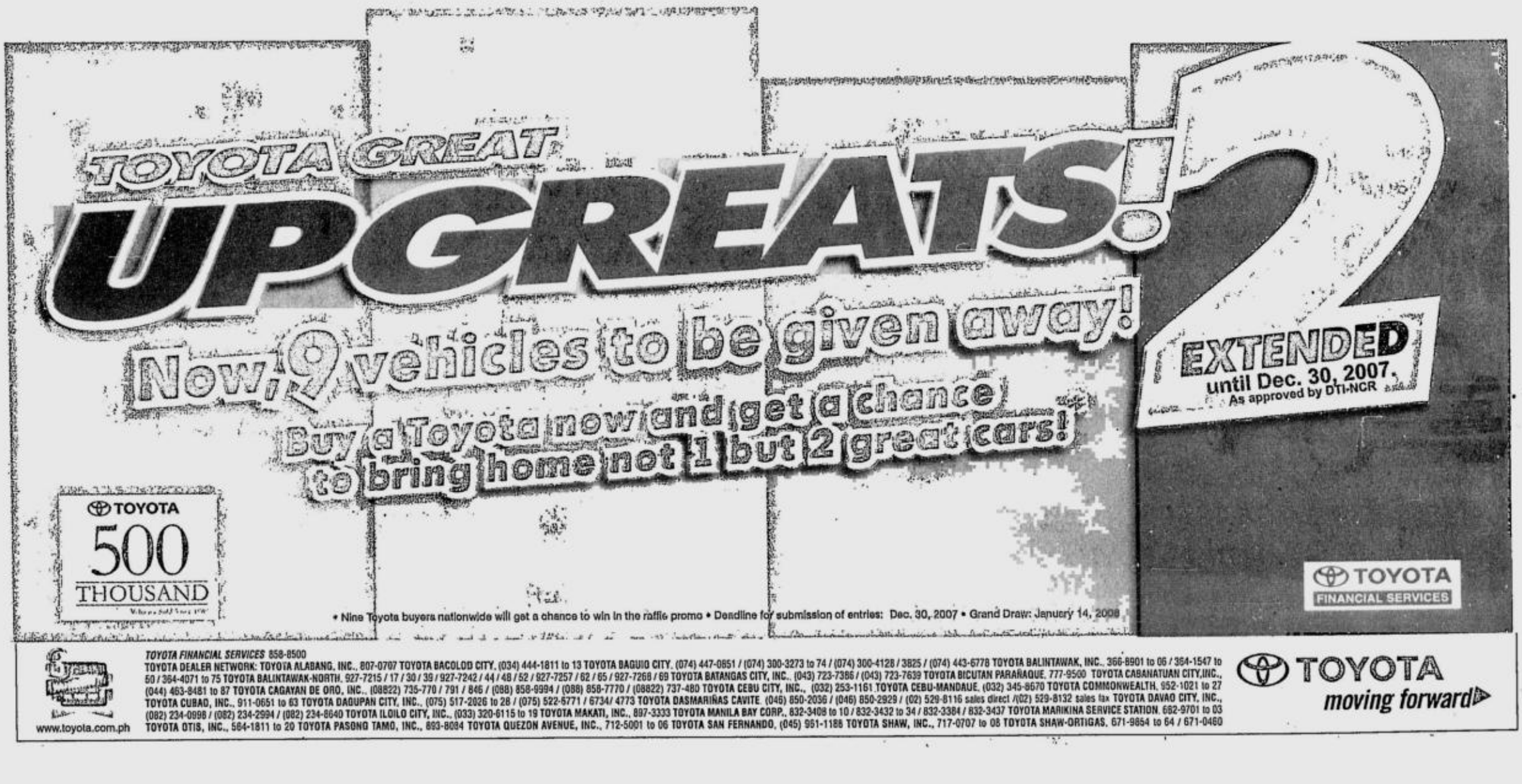
What a green light truly means

The next time you approach an intersection with traffic lights, ask yourself what a green light means.

If your answer is "Go", you are only half right. For full marks, you need to remind yourself that a green light does indeed mean go, but only if it is safe to do so.

Then ask yourself how long has it been green and what color will it change to next? The longer it has been green, the sooner it will change to yellow. And yellow does not

GREEN/ 05



Commemorative plates: Who can use them and how

Commemorative plates are becoming "in" again with the recent centennial celebrations of various institutions.

But who can install commemorative plates on their cars? And how should they be installed?

AAP vice president Johnny Angeles said there is an existing set of guidelines on commemorative plates that should be followed. Issued as far back as 1983 by the Bureau of Land Transportation (now Land Transportation Office), Administrative Order 99003 contains the rules and regulations governing commemorative plates and stickers.

According to AO 99003 of the LTO, any group, organization or association must apply first with the Office of the President for authority to use commemorative plates/stickers. After this authority is issued, the organization should submit a sample design of the plates and windshield stickers to the LTO, the names of persons authorized to use the plates/stickers, and certified copies of the registration papers of the vehicles on which the plates will be installed.

Angeles said that the order mandates commemorative plates to be installed in conspicuous places on the motor vehicle, preferably one in front and the other at the rear, provided that the regular number plates are displayed in the space designated for the purpose.

"The permanent plate shall not be removed to accommodate the commemorative plates and the validating windshield sticker shall be pasted at the left upper side of the front windshield," he said.

The order, he added, points out that the duration for the use of commemorative plates shall be based on the period of time authorized by the Office of the President. Upon expiration of said authority, the commemorative plates must be immediately detached from the vehicle.

Angeles said users of commemorative plates can be apprehended for removing their permanent plates and installing commemorative plates in their place, failure to display the regular plate, continuing to use expired commemorative plates, illegally transferring commemorative plates from one motor vehicle to another, or illegally using commemorative plates without prior authority. "The penalty for each violation is P5,000 plus the impounding of the motor vehicle in the last two cases."

Users of commemorative plates can be apprehended for removing their permanent plates and installing commemorative plates in their place

10 points for greener motoring

The AAP, as the only member club in the Philippines of the FIA (Federation Internationale de l'Automobile), is tasked to inform the motoring public about the FIA Declaration on Air Quality, Climate Change and Automotive Fuel Economy which was drafted at the FIA General Assembly last October in Paris. The centerpiece of the FIA Declaration is the adoption of 140 g/km as the first worldwide target for carbon dioxide emissions in passenger cars.

The 10-point Guide for Greener Motoring supplements the FIA Declaration:

1. Buy Green-Check environmental performance (emission standards/ fuel economy) before you buy a new car, fuel and components.

2. Plan your journey-Planning your route can avoid delay and diversion. Ten minutes of unnecessary driving in a one-hour trip results in a 14-percent decrease in fuel efficiency. For short journeys consider cycling, public transport or walking.

3. Check tire pressures frequently-Driving on tires whose air pressure is 50kPA (0.5kg/cm2) lower than it should be decreases fuel efficiency by 2 percent and 4 percent respectively in urban and suburban areas.

4. Reduce loads and avoid the need for roof racks-Driving with unnecessary onboard weight leads to a significant decrease in fuel efficiency and baggage on the roof will add to aerodynamic drag.

5. Don't warm up your engine before starting off-Today's passenger cars don't require warming up, except in cold climates and after long periods of non-use. Slow running is enough to warm up the engine.

6. Use air conditioning only when necessary-Avoid setting the AC too low. AC when the outdoor temperature is 25 degrees Celsius decreases fuel efficiency by 12 percent.

7. Accelerate gently and keep your speed constant-Start off gently (20 km/h in 5 seconds, for an 11-percent increase in fuel economy) and avoid abrupt, heavy accelerations while driving. Avoid tailgating causing unnecessary acceleration/deceleration which costs 2 percent and 6 percent less fuel efficiency respectively in urban and suburban areas. Use higher gears as soon as traffic allows.

8. Use enginebraking-Releasing the accelerator when recognizing the need to slow down stops the fuel supply, leading to a 2-percent increase in fuel efficiency.

9. Don't idle your engine-Ten minutes of engine idling (in neutral, with the AC off) wastes 130cc of fuel. Turn your engine off instead of letting it idle when it is safe to do so.

10. Offset your CO2 emissions-If you are driving economically and can't reduce your car use, then consider buying carbon offsets equivalent to your annual mileage.

Don't warm up your engine before starting off-Today's passenger cars don't require warming up, except in cold climates and after long periods of non-use. Slow running is enough to warm up the engine

ROAD TIPS

What a green light . . .

From page O4

mean "Speed up to cross the intersection before the lights change". It means Stop. After yellow comes red.

These days, especially with the congestion generated by the holiday season, more and more drivers risk a yellow light or even a red light to get across an intersection.

That, in turn, means that you need an extra "defensive driving" technique. Even though the lights are "with you," always glance both ways as you approach the junction, to make sure that you can get across safely. By taking a moment to look both ways, even when your light is green, you might spot somebody who is prepared to risk his safety-and yours-by ignoring the traffic signals.

Even if the light is green in your favor, keep using your rear mirror as well. It may be that somebody is following you too closely. In this situation, your spotting in good time that the green light is about to change to yellow enables you to slow down early, brake more gently and thus reduce the chances of a rear-end collision.

Top 10 motoring traps in Metro Manila

From page O3

the barriers are okay. He added that since many of the victims were either under the influence of alcohol or drugs or falling asleep, the accidents should teach them a lesson. Was he saying that these people do not deserve safe roads?

Those barriers, as well as the U-turn concrete barriers, should be lighted at night or at the very least should have reflectorized markings. There should also be warning signs some 300 meters before the barriers. Weeks before these new barriers were installed, there should have been tri-media announcements informing the motoring public about them. Road safety should never be compromised!

Have a safe and blessed Christmas and New Year! Happy motoring!

Give peace of mind as your gift this Christmas

From page O3

to which AAP is affiliated.

Unlike the two-vehicle registration allotment accorded to Regular Members, Associate Members can register one vehicle under his or her name. But because the club is member-based, an Associate Membership bestows upon the cardholder roadside assistance for vehicles other than the car registered under his/her membership. This, of course, is provided that he or she is present at the time of the service request. The registered vehicle, however, is entitled to round-the-clock roadside support even if the member is not around.

Those interested in giving AAP memberships as gifts this Christmas, get in touch with AAP's sales and marketing department at 723-0808.

ROAD SAFETY TRAINING FOR BUS DRIVERS
Some 44 drivers of the Vallacar Transit in Negros attended a special seminar on road safety Oct. 23 to 26 at the Ceres Liner Compound in Mansilingan, Bacolod City. The drivers learned the basics of the Traffic Code, road courtesy, first aid, and the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle and practicing stress management techniques in their day-to-day driving. The seminar was sponsored by the AAP with the help of the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) and the National Center for Transportation Studies (NCTS).

The AAP provides 24/7 Emergency Roadside Service to its members with 20 tow trucks (11 at the main office in Quezon City, 9 at the North Luzon Expressway) and eight car carriers/flatbeds. Three of the tow trucks are Big Brothers that can tow buses, 10-wheeler trucks and tractors with container vans. Shown are Big Brother 3, a car carrier, a service car and a pickup truck parked in front of the AAP Service Building on Aurora Boulevard, Quezon City.

DRINK

From page O3

however, motorists can help minimize drunk-driving by keeping the following things in mind:

1. Drinking and driving kills. It may not kill the drunk-driver but a pedestrian or the passenger of another car. It could even kill you.

2. Do not drink if you plan to drive. Real friends don't force their driving friends to drink.

3. Never get into a vehicle with a driver who has been drinking. If your friend is drunk, get his car keys and call a cab to take him home.

4. Alcohol leads to slower reaction times, difficulty in gauging speed and distance, drowsiness and loss of concentration.

5. Late night drinkers may still be over the limit the following morning.

AAP invests in Auto Sport Academy Asia

From page O4

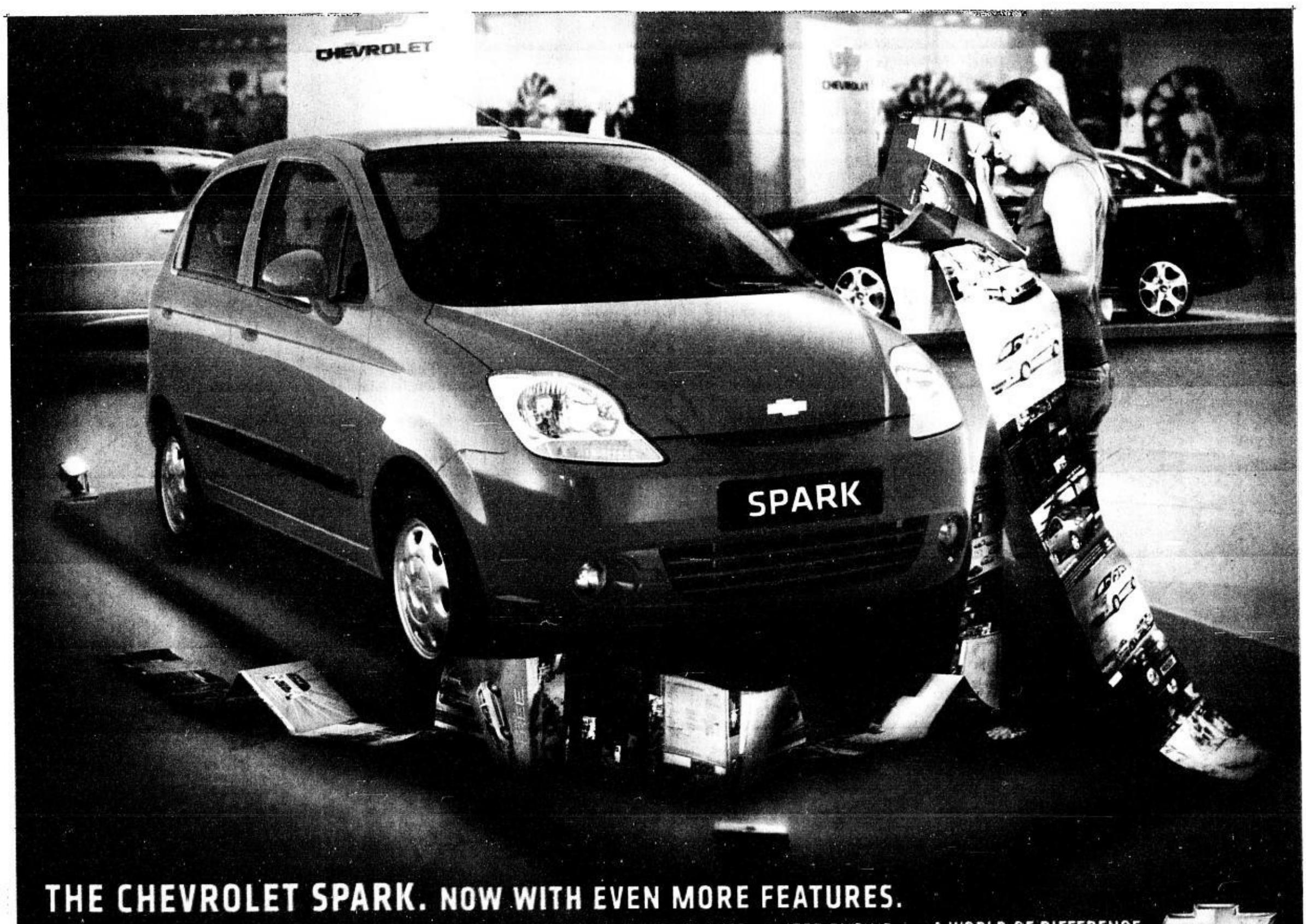
Formerly known as La Filière, Auto Sport Academy was created by French oil company Elf to discover new talents. About 40 to 50 young drivers enroll at the school every year, with many of them, such as Alain Prost, becoming F1 superstars.

Eduque added that AAP will be sponsoring two Formula Campus cars in the school to the tune of P1 million. In exchange, AAP can send the best Filipino drivers to train in the school.

Initially, Auto Sport Academy Asia will offer a six-week course condensed from the one-year curriculum in France. Being a co-owner of the school, AAP is entitled to a discount for the drivers it will send. "Instead of 23,000 Euros, our drivers would only pay 19,000 for the course," he said.

Eduque noted that this amount is much lower than what Filipino drivers now spend in racing events such as CHAMP in the United States and Formula BMW in Europe. "The problem with training in these events is that young drivers eventually get discouraged because the jump from karting to formula racing is drastic," he said.

And the best thing about training in Auto Sport Academy Asia is the potential to earn a 90,000-Euro scholarship in ASA France. "After the six-week course, they will choose the best two drivers and send them to France to train for one year for free," Eduque said.



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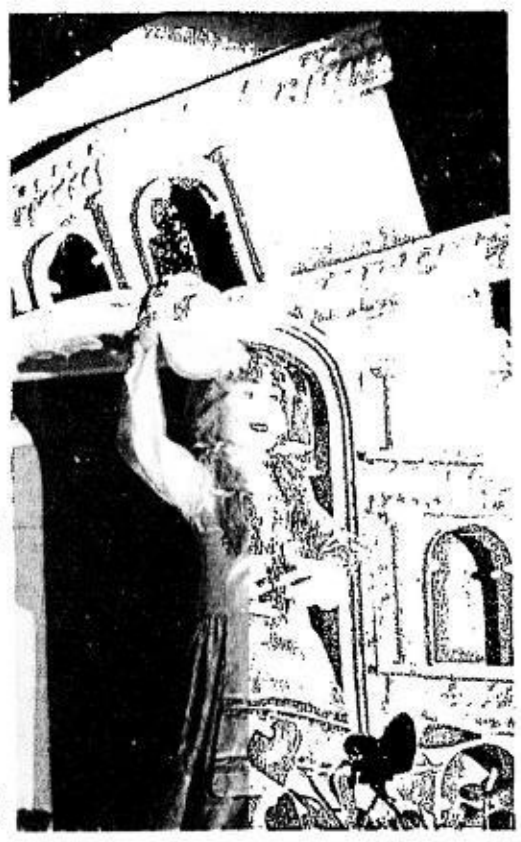
Christmas Shopping 2007

'In the air there's that feeling of buying ... and giving'

Christmas around the world



By Joel V. Nigos

Christmas in the Philippines is usually ushered in by cold mornings and by 9-day dawn Masses known as *misa de gallo*. Christmas carols are heard as early as September while the foremost Christmas symbol, the parol, adorn even the most humble of dwellings. Christmas Day is usually a family affair, where gifts are exchanged and families partake in a bountiful feast.

Famous for observing the longest Yuletide season, it's only after Epiphany when decorations are removed, signifying the end of the holidays.

If the weather is chilly here at Christmastime, in Australia it's usually very hot. So, don't expect snow to fall on this season. Skies are always blue on this continent where temperatures range from 25 to 40 degrees. Thus, traditional dinners have been replaced with family gatherings at midday in backyards, picnics in parks, gardens and on the beach.

In Africa, Christmas is observed throughout the continent by Christian communities large and small. On Christmas Day, carols are sung from the Congo on down to South Africa where it's a summer holiday that carries an irresistible invitation to the beaches, the rivers and the shaded mountain slopes. Meats are roasted, gifts are exchanged and family visits made. The Coptic Christians in Ethiopia and Egypt celebrate Christmas on the 7th of January (rather than the 25th of December) because they follow a different calendar.

The United States, meanwhile, is so multicultural that you'll find many ways of celebrating Christmas. A family of Eastern European origin favor turkey with trimmings, while those of Polish preferred *keilbasi* (Polish sausage), cabbage dishes and soups. Also, all year long children are told to behave, or they will get coal in their stockings. On Christmas Eve, they hang highly stylized stockings on the mantle of the fireplace, then go to bed early so that they will find presents in the morning. Cookies are traditionally left for Santa, and a carrot for Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer.

Animated display

Robinsons Place Iloilo aims to capture the joy of the season with a unique animated display which shows images of how Christmas is observed around the world.

Aptly dubbed "Christmas Around the World," Christmas nights in the city will be lighted up with gay and bright colors and mechanical and moving life-sized dolls representing 13 selected countries of the world. On cue, each doll will sway and move to the tune of their local Christmas carols when their turn comes. They will be placed significantly in the respective miniature replicas of their famous landmark—Japan's pagodas, Great Wall of China, India's Taj Majal, US' Grand Canyon and Statue of Liberty, Russia's Kremlins, our very own Bahay Kubo, Hawaii's picturesque beaches, Africa's wild safari, Rome's Colloseum, Australia's Opera House, Italy's Leaning Tower and France's Eiffel Tower.

"It is the fun mall's present to the city of Iloilo and the neighboring provinces of Region 6 as it seeks to bring people from different places to experience a unique and colorful Christmas celebration in the city," shares Ditas L. Taleon, mall manager of Robinsons Place Iloilo.

With three viewing times nightly at 6:30, 7:15 and 8 p.m., this creative ensemble and miniature representation of Christmas the world over will run until Jan. 4, 2008. The grand launch was held last Nov. 28 with fireworks display and a mini-concert by teen heartthrob Sam Concepcion. Robinsons Place Iloilo senior marketing communications officer Rofel John T. Parreño and Carol-V Espinosa were hosts.

Other Christmas symbols from Asia to other parts of Europe are also vividly captured in the animated display.

Christmas in China to Japan

Christians in China celebrate Christmas by lighting their houses with beautiful paper lanterns and decorating their Christmas trees which they call "Trees of Light" with paper chains, paper flowers and paper lanterns.

Italy was where the Nativity scene, one of the most beloved and enduring symbols of the season, originated and where it remains very popular. In Rome, cannon are fired from Castel St. Angelo of Christmas Eve to announce the beginning of the holiday season. A 24-hour fast ends with an elaborate Christmas feast. Small presents are drawn from the Urn of Fate.

The idea of exchanging gifts seems to appeal strongly to the Japanese people. Besides exchanging gifts they eat turkey on Christmas Day, and in some places there are even community Christmas trees. They decorate their houses with evergreens and mistletoe, and in some homes Christmas carols are sung gaily.

Russia, Spain

In Russia, the religious festival of Christmas is being replaced by the Festival of Winter but there are some traditions that are still kept up in some parts of the country. In the traditional Russian Christmas, special prayers are said and people fast, sometimes for 39 days, until Jan. 6th Christmas Eve, when the first evening star appears in the sky. Then begins a 12-course supper in honor of each of the 12 apostles.

Christmas is a deeply religious holiday in Spain. The country's patron saint is the Virgin Mary and the Christmas season officially begins Dec. 8, the feast of the Immaculate Conception. It is celebrated each year in front of the great Gothic cathedral in Seville with a ceremony called los Seises or the "dance of six."

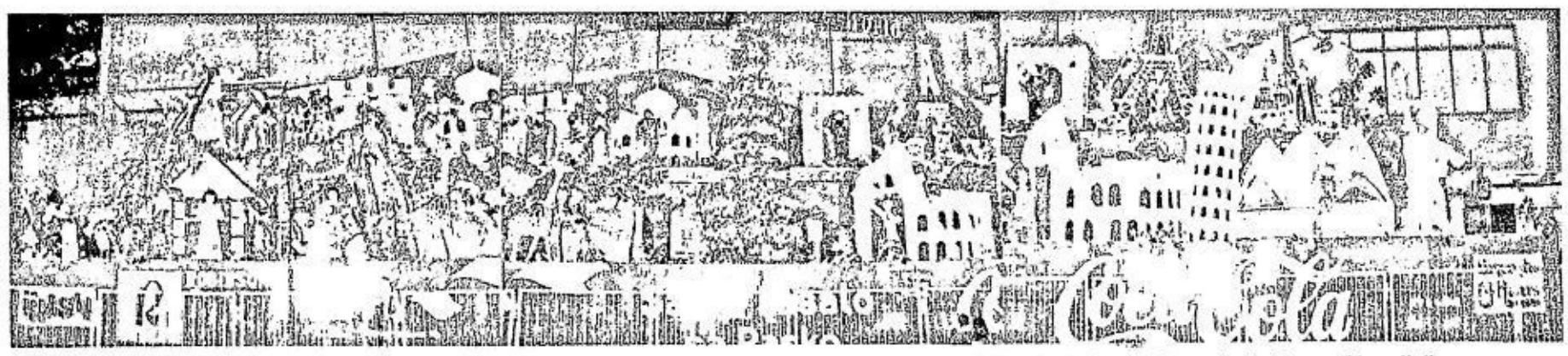
Hawaii to India

When it comes to Christmas trees, Hawaii residents prove themselves to be extremely versatile. Palm trees are frequently decorated for Christmas, especially in outdoor displays and neighborhood yards. They nicely complement displays of Santa riding an outrigger canoe rather than a sleigh, dolphins in place of reindeer, and elves laboring in aloha shirts.

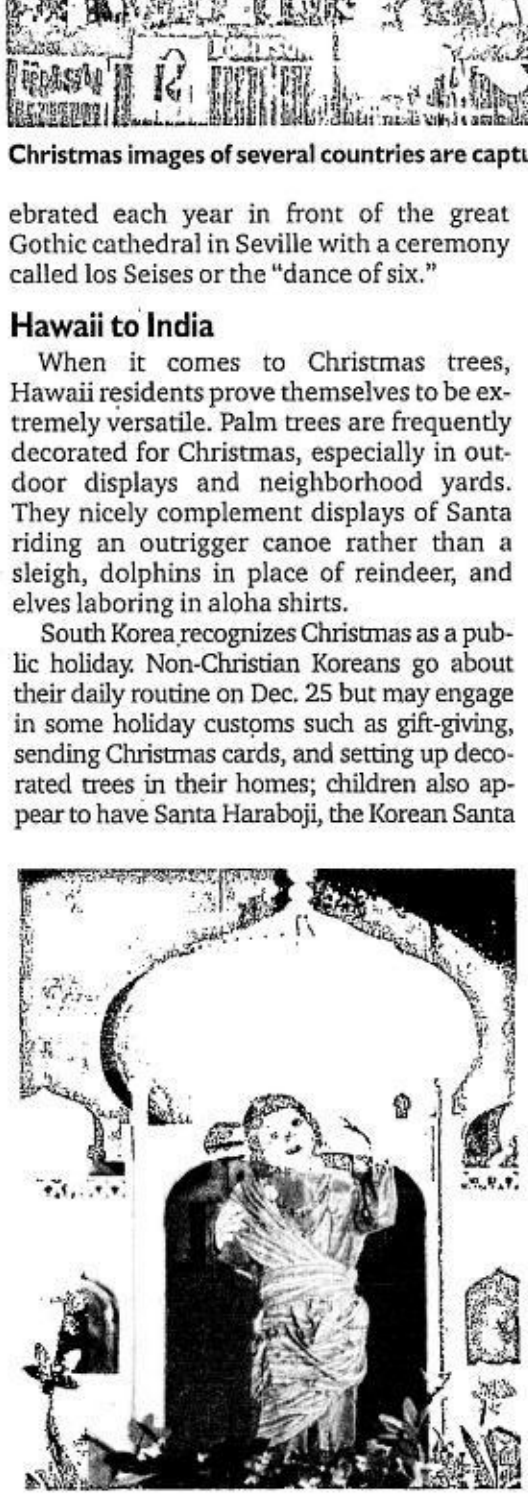
South Korea recognizes Christmas as a public holiday. Non-Christian Koreans go about their daily routine on Dec. 25 but may engage in some holiday customs such as gift-giving, sending Christmas cards, and setting up decorated trees in their homes; children also appear to have Santa Haraboji, the Korean Santa Claus.

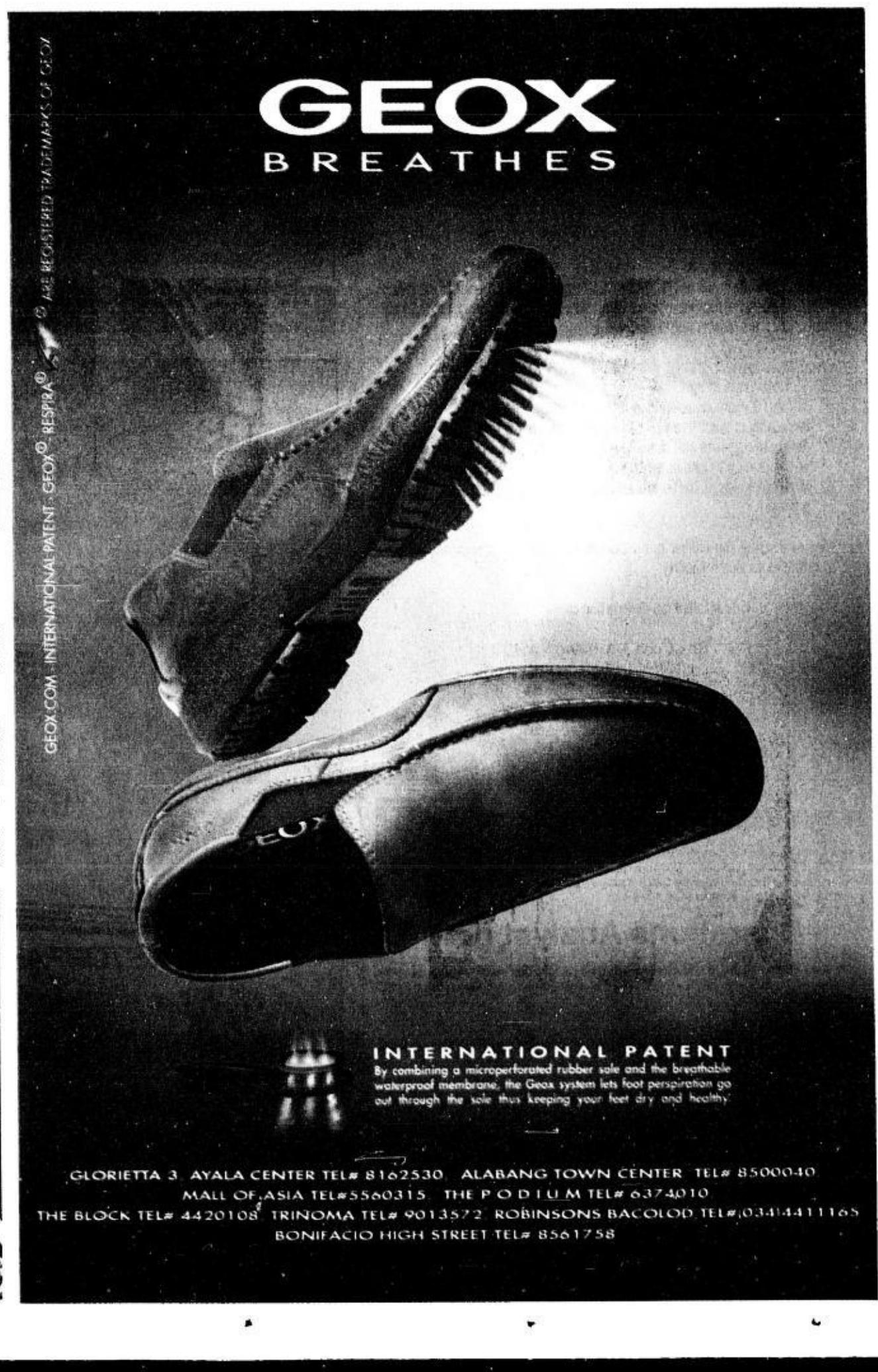
Everyone has a Christmas tree, sometimes decorated in the old way with red ribbons and real white wax candles in France. Fir trees in the garden are often decorated too, with lights on all night. The French make a traditional Yule log-shaped cake called the buche de Nol, which means "Christmas Log." The cake is served at the grand feast of the season, which is called *le rveillon*. Le rveillon is a very late supper held after the midnight mass on Christmas Eve.

Christians in India decorate banana or mango trees. They also light small oil-burning lamps as decorations and fill their churches with red flowers. In South India, Christians put small clay lamps on the rooftops and walls of their houses, just as the Hindus do during their festival called Diwali.



Christmas images of several countries are captured in the animated display 'Christmas Around the World' at the Ledesma Carpark, Robinsons Place Iloilo





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Major players and benchmarks

A look at the Asia Titans, the biggest and best known companies in Asia. Below, some of the Dow Jones stocks, symbols, volume in millions, latest value and change in points and percentage of biggest and most liquid stocks traded.

DJIA Component Stocks

Stock	Symbol	Volume, In millions	Latest	Change Points	Change Percentage
AT&T	T	10.80	$41.11	-0.39	-0.94%
Alcoa	AA	5.10	40.72	-0.78	-1.88
AltriaGp	MO	5.00	71.08	0.08	0.11
AmExpress	AXP	1.90	61.40	-1.02	-1.63
AmIntlGp	AIG	4.60	69.94	-0.50	-0.71
Boeing	BA	1.40	98.24	0.59	0.60
Caterpillar	CAT	2.50	77.53	-0.46	-0.59
Citigroup	C	7.30	51.44	-0.42	-0.81
CocaCola	KO	2.30	52.53	-0.37	-0.70
Disney	DIS	3.60	34.45	-0.09	-0.26
DuPont	DD	1.70	52.00	-0.13	-0.25
ExxonMobil	XOM	9.70	84.50	-0.86	-1.01
GenElec	GE	12.10	38.42	-0.28	-0.72
GenMotor	GM	12.70	36.42	-1.56	-4.11
HewlettPk	HPQ	5.20	45.76	0.18	0.39
HomeDpt	HD	7.30	39.39	0.19	0.48
Honeywell	HON	2.10	57.69	0.49	0.86
Intel	INTC	19.70	24.50	-0.09	-0.39
IBM	IBM	3.50	106.96	0.38	0.36
JPMorgChas	JPM	5.70	48.70	-0.64	-1.30
JohnsJohns	JNJ	4.10	62.13	0.18	0.29
McDonalds	MCD	2.80	51.10	-0.30	-0.58
Merck	MRK	3.60	49.51	-0.32	-0.64
Microsoft	MSFT	22.90	29.91	-0.11	-0.37
Pfizer	PPE	18.00	25.92	0.11	0.43
ProctGamb	PG	5.80	61.58	-0.21	-0.34
3M	MMM	1.10	87.53	-0.41	-0.47
UnitedTech	UTX	1.40	72.38	-0.09	-0.12
Verizon	VZ	4.50	41.89	-0.23	-0.55
WalMart	WMT	5.40	48.17	-0.30	-0.62

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- ☑ Must have reasonable awareness and familiarity in IT programs and process

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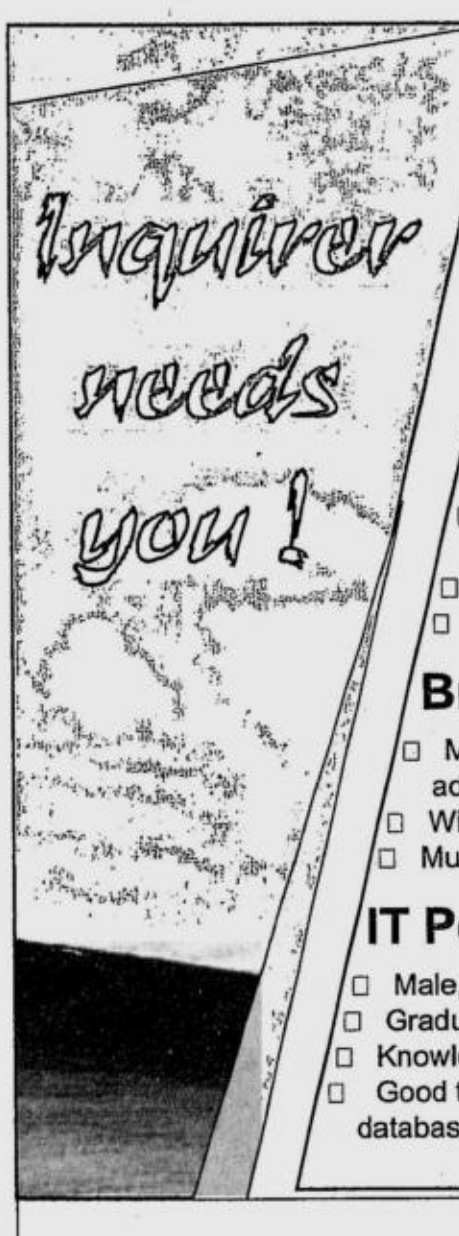

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- ▯ Preferably female, 21-28 yrs. old

Branch Cashier

- ▯ Must be a graduate of any business course however Accountancy will be an advantage
- ▯ With at least 3-5 years banking experience preferably in a supervisory level
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IT Personnel

- ▯ Male, 20-28 years old, single
- ▯ Graduate of ComSci, Comp Engineering, or any IT courses
- ▯ Knowledgeable on LAN and WAN
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AYALA CENTER

The Ayala Corporation, is currently seeking program staff for its Business Enabling Environment (BEE) team – Doing Business Plus Project, a technical assistance and capacity building project that aims to improve business regulation and the local business environment.

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The Analyst's main role will be to conduct research, participate in project design, implementation and management, draft reports and presentations and lead project measurement and evaluation for IFC BEE projects.

Qualifications and Position Requirements:

- Graduate degree preferably in Business Management, Economics, Law, Public Policy or related specialty;
- Five or more years' relevant technical experience in at least one of the following areas: policy analysis, business regulation, and policy advocacy;
- Experience with analytical assessment and use of standard analytical, statistical and presentation software;
- Fluent in English, both spoken and written;
- Ability to communicate ideas clearly and confidently, conduct research and analysis on difficult but well defined multiple tasks, articulate issues and recommend solutions;
- Track record of producing high quality written work.

These positions will require domestic and some international travel. The position will be based in Ayala main office. Salaries will be commensurate to qualification and experience. Candidates are invited to send application letter, a comprehensive resume with details of work experience, academic records, and references (at least three names with full contact details) to ayala-hr.com not later than the close of business hours on August 17, 2007. All applications will be treated with strictest confidence. For corporate information, please visit www.ayala.org. Only short-listed candidates will be called for interview.

Your kids deserve clean air in their room

RESIDENTS OF METRO MANILA BREATHE dirty air every day of the year. A study has found that air pollution in Metro Manila is worsening, and if not immediately addressed, the city may not be suitable anymore for human habitation within 10 years. Lead, found in the exhaust fumes of motor vehicles and which finds its way into residential areas, is the most harmful toxin to children because it adversely affects the nervous system, decreases their IQs, and slows down motor skills. In these gadget-crazy times when everything from cell phones to computers are selling like hotcakes, it certainly makes sense to have the latest and most effective gadget as a safeguard against these harmful air impurities.

There are many brands and manufacturers of air purifiers today, each using different filter methods, how do you know which is right for you? First look for the Aham (Association of Home Appliance Manufacturer) seal that indicates an independent certification.

Second, consider the type of filter inside. There are three basic types:

True 99.97 percent Hepa-air cleaner filters for patients with very severe allergy or asthma illnesses. These doctor-recommended filters have an efficiency of 99.97 percent (0.3 microns) making them beneficial for asthma and allergy patients.

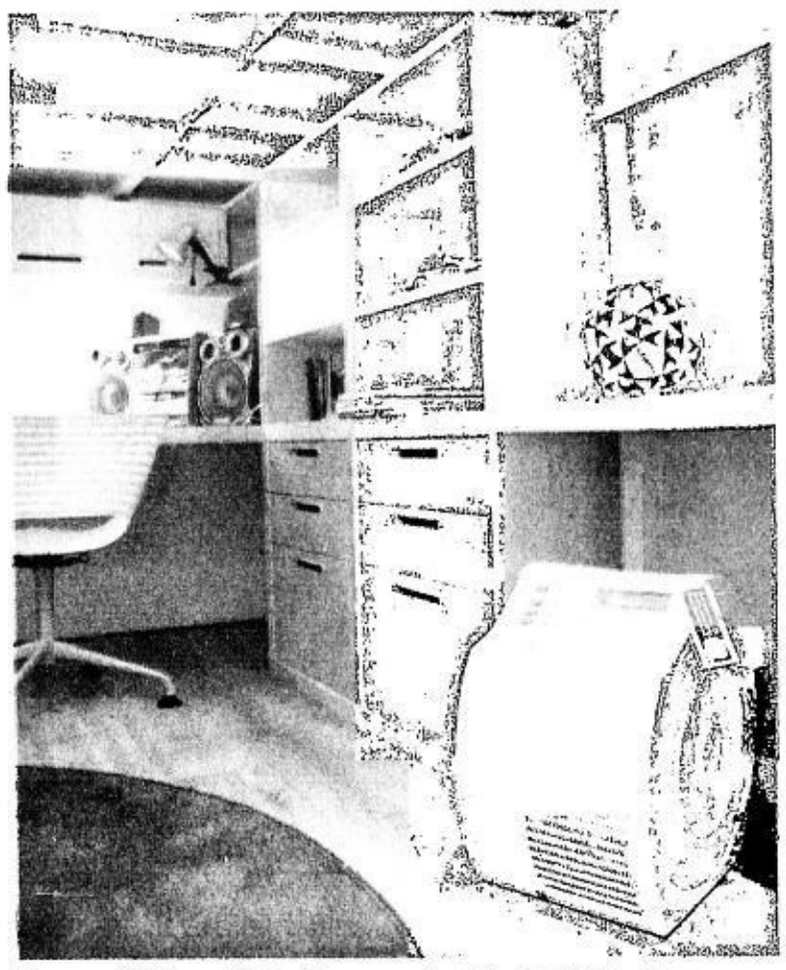
Ionic Products-These units are often shown on television but have very little proven effectiveness. The collecting plates will get dirty, but they generally lack enough power to clean a room of irritating particles. They also may emit low levels of ozone which gives off an "electric" smell and could irritate some forms of asthma. These products typically have small cleaning range-a four- to five-foot square according to Aham standards.

Intense Field Dielectric (IFD) a breakthrough method featuring a permanent and highly effective electronic diffusion filter system. It is proven to help remove dust, pollen, dander and tobacco smoke particles from the room. Efficiencies can range from 95 percent to 99 percent. These are recommended for most people seeking an air purifier for relief from seasonal allergies and who are seeking an effective and low maintenance way to clean the air in their home. The filter is cleanable and permanent thus providing great savings.

Since 1959, Honeywell has been designing, manufacturing and selling air cleaners that effectively trap and filter up to 99.97 percent of airborne impurities like staining dirt, smoke and bacteria. Honeywell manufactures only doctor-recommended true Hepa and IFD (Intense Field Dielectric) filters, making it a true advocate of indoor air cleanliness. In fact, its latest IFD permanent filter model, the QuietClean Air Purifier (HFD-806-AP3), boasts of the new Dual Ultra-Violet Light feature that reduces bacteria and viruses. It also boasts of a Hepa performance of up to 99 percemt air purification and a permanent filter that needs no replacement, ever.

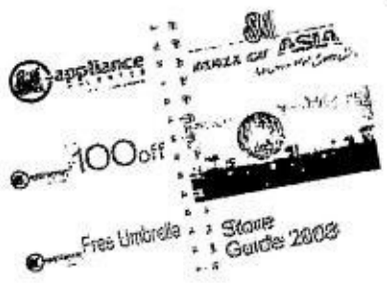
So, on top of your latest home theater system, your pristine built-in kitchen, 3G cell phone, and your Core 2 Duo laptop, don't you think it's high time you pay some attention to the air you and your loved ones breathe at home?

For inquiries, visit or call authorized distributors at Ariston/Indesit showrooms: Shangri-La (631-8282), and at MC Home Depot, Fort Bonifacio (815-8875). Honeywell is also available in True Value, Handyman, Rustans, Duty Free Philippines, Royal Duty Free, Puregold, Ansons Emporium, SM and Western Branches.



Honeywell's Hepa Air Purifiers are a staple in the kids' bedroom-perfect for those suffering from allergies and asthma.

Mall of Asia Planner



The planner is the ultimate guide to the mall with a map, photos, and trivia.

PLANNING FOR THE YEAR AHEAD? The limited edition SM Mall of Asia 2008 Planner is not only a great way to get organized, it's also the ultimate guide to your way around the mall, and offering a lot of shopping opportunities with coupons from many of the mall's outlets.

A project of SM Foundation for the benefit of its Medical Missions, the planner is a visual delight with the cover designed by world renowned artist Jevenal Sanso. It's your perfect guide around the Mall of Asia with a Map, photos by the Lomomanila group, and some trivia about the mall. The planner is also loaded with coupons from Toy Kingdom, ACE Hardware, SM Appliance Center, Our Home, Surplus Shop, Kultura Filipino, Taste Asia, SM Cinema, the SM Ice Skating Rink, and many other participating stores.

The SM Mall of Asia Limited Edition 2008 Planner is available at the Concierge, SM retail stores, and selected tenants at the SM Mall of Asia.

The popcorn that's right for you

NOWADAYS, when people want something to munch while viewing their favorite TV show, they turn to the buttery flavor and crunchy fullness of microwave popcorn. Unlike chips or nuts, good ol' popcorn has the advantage of being served hot; popped right out of one's very own oven. It's an ideal on-the-go snack for family and friends because it's so easy to prepare with a simple step that anyone can handle. In just a couple of minutes, out comes all the savory goodness of a traditional pastime snack. Popcorn is an excellent source for dietary fiber. Did you know that popcorn is 100-percent whole grain? That's right! With more nutritious snacks and natural products competing in the market, Orville Redenbacher's Popcorn has maintained its status as the leading health snack. The key to a healthy diet is food that meets your nutritional needs while staying within your calorie count. Check out Orville's low-calorie products. Less calories spell the 'magic number' for what doctors and nutritionists approve in a snack. Calorie watchers have a reliable pick with Orville Redenbacher's. With the terrific taste and healthy goodness, Orville Popcorn surely guarantees superb snacking fun for the family, *barkada*, and colleagues at work. Put that Orville bag right now into the microwave and just before you know it, you'll be feasting on corn that's fluffy, chewy and heavenly! Orville Redenbacher's products are available in major supermarkets nationwide.

Jack 'n Jill Nips for the Holidays

ADD LOTS OF COLORFUL FUN to the Holidays by unleashing your festive creativity with do-it-at-home "NIPSmas" gift ideas consisting of yummy pastry goodies as well as colorful art and crafts projects spruced up with NIPS Chocolates. Here's a simple project that you can make in the comfort of your own home. It's a great Christmas décor idea you can add to your yuletide displays, or something you can use as a Christmas gift!

Nips Jar

--A colorful display of Nips chocolate candies to please the senses. It makes the perfect Christmas gift for someone who needs a quick chocolate fix.

Directions:

Pick a container (jars, glasses, or shot glasses) and fill it with Nips candies.

Wrap the container with cellophane and decorate with ribbons and other ornaments.

Christmas Shopping at Festival Supermall

EVERYONE TAKES GREAT PLEASure in discovering the perfect gifts for those special people in our lives and it is even more rewarding watching them open and cherish them. Crowded malls, long queues and out-of-stock situations can however make Christmas shopping an arduous task.

Last-minute shopping is never wise as it makes you spend more and most likely make you end up buying gifts that your loved ones may not appreciate. It is all about proper planning.

Festival Supermall in Filicity allows you to do your holiday shopping on great selections from over 600 stores.

At the 3rd level of Festival Supermall lies one of the mall's newest offerings which are continuously luring treasure hunters as well as collectors of rare mementos. Treasure Trove is a specialty-store lane designed for the meticulous shopper looking for rare souvenirs, unusual gift items and accent pieces.

At the second level is the Via Modà and Style Boulevard, the mall's fashion district where fashion-conscious shoppers can find various shops that offer quality and trend-setting clothes. Thinking of what to give your techie kids? Then visit Cyberway, which is a domain for the latest gadgets and gizmos. Chef's Avenue at the third level and Festival Walk at the 2nd level houses fine and casual dining restaurants that will certainly provide the family the best dining experience after doing their shopping or watching a movie.

Festival Supermall in Filicity, Alabang is the premiere shopping, dining, amusement and entertainment destination south of Metro Manila, with over 600 stores to choose from. Mall hours are from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. For inquiries, call 850-3514 or log on to www.festivalsupermall.com.

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• 2.7" Wide Clear Photo LCD Plus
DCR-DVD708 P 32,999
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Christmas Treasures 2007
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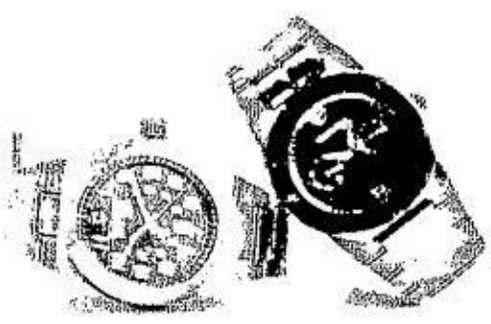
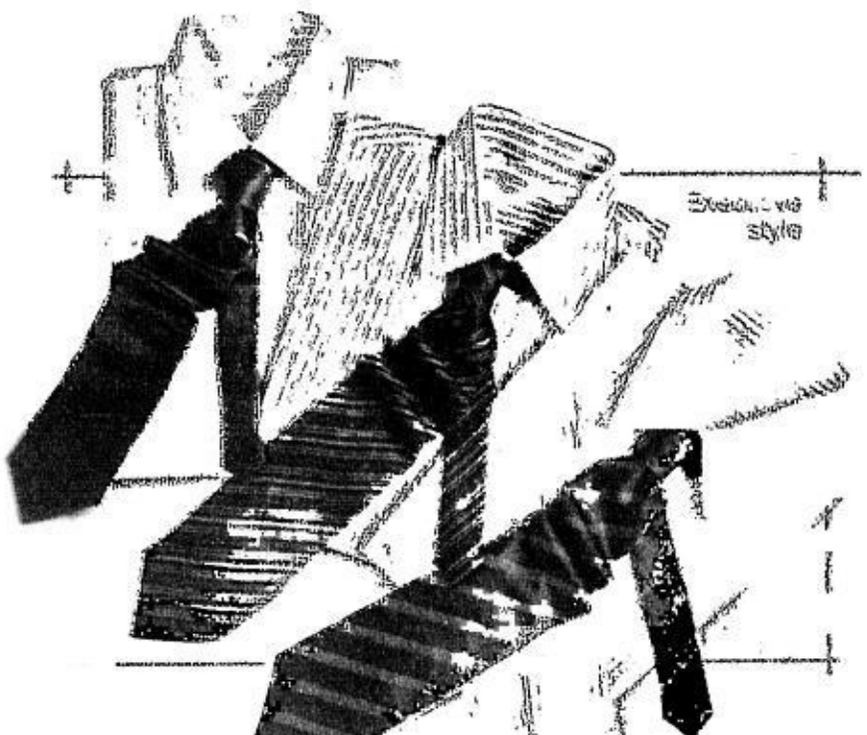
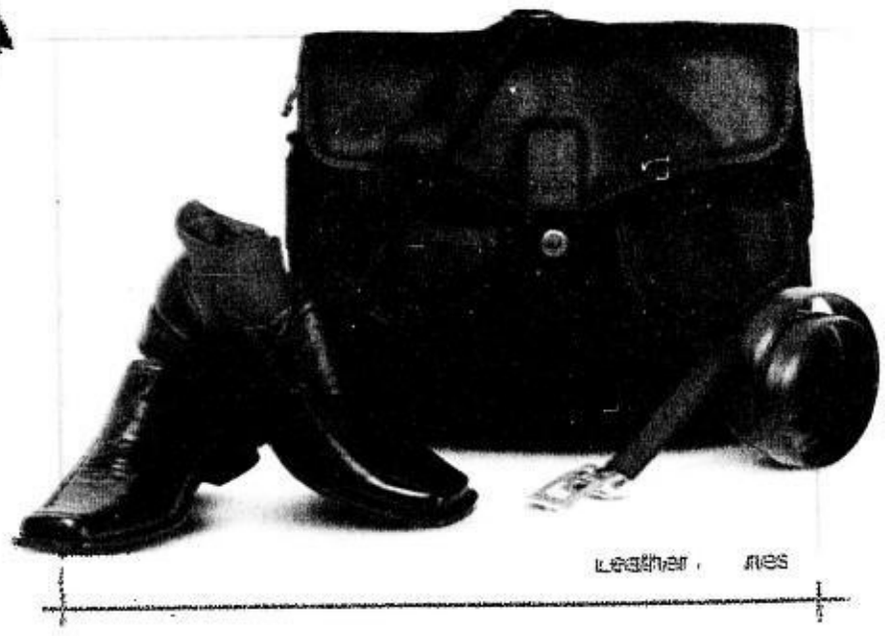
all you want to Give
all you want to Get







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Christmas Shopping 2007

'In the air there's that feeling of buying

Christmas is big at SM Pampanga and Clark

More than 15,000 spectators filled the SM Pampanga Amphitheater to witness the world-renowned giant lantern festival.

THE SM SUPERMALLS IN PAMpanga celebrate Christmas in a big way with something traditional-the Giant Lantern Festival at SM City Pampanga and something new-the Biggest Santa Claus in Asia at SM City Clark.

Something big is in town-the biggest Santa Claus that will bring cheers to shoppers for the whole month of December at SM City Clark. Made by Candellero Handicrafts, it stands 20 feet tall, and 13 feet wide, and made of fiberglass, and 13 feet wide. Fred Velasques, along with 11 of his staff, carved the Santa figure for over two months.

Along with the Biggest Santa Claus in Asia, the mall also encourages shoppers to share in a big way. A toy donation project was launch during the Big Santa launch, wherein shoppers can donate old and new toys at the Santa area at the Event Centre at SM City Clark. The toys will be distributed to the less fortunate children in Angeles City.

SM's another mall in Pampanga, SM City Pampanga, will also celebrate the holiday big time as it once again becomes the venue for the

SM/ Q2

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE GOLDILOCKS CAKEPLANT TEAM!

As expected, the country's best cakes and pastries can only come from the most outstanding facility, while utilizing the best manufacturing techniques and methods. When combined with a loyal team of experts who ensure the strictest quality control standards, this becomes a true recipe for lasting goodness.

To the dedicated men and women of **the Goldilocks Cakeplant in Shaw Boulevard**, the measure of excellence that Goldilocks has established in the past 41 years is both a great challenge and inspiration. According to Evelyn Gancayco, Goldilocks Manufacturing Director, Filipinos have established a great affinity for Goldilocks and its products, and with this affinity comes a certain expectation.

"Admittedly, it sounds a bit profound, but our standards for total customer satisfaction are applied to both distance and time." Evelyn began. "Each of our 230 branches nationwide must have exactly the same level of high quality, with no exceptions. Likewise, the Goldilocks mamon, ensaymada, or mocha roll that our customers loved so much as children should be just as good now that they are adults," she explained.

With this intense dedication shared by each member of the team, it is no wonder that **the Philippine Bureau of Food and Drugs (BFAD) recently awarded the Goldilocks Cakeplant with full 'Good Manufacturing Practices' (GMP) accreditation.**

Plant Manager Ross Gonzales, for his part, highlighted the beneficial relationship of Goldilocks with the BFAD. "For us, the BFAD is much more than a monitoring agency or compliance bureau. We view them as an essential partner in ensuring that the Filipino consumer receives the safest, finest, and highest quality products," he stated. "In my 14 years of being part of the Goldilocks family, I can truly say that each employee shares this underlying vision – that of putting our customers ahead of everyone else, and making certain that their Goldilocks experience is a positively unforgettable one," Ross enthused.

With this significant recognition coming from the BFAD, what's next for the Goldilocks Cakeplant team? A quote from the company's president, Mr. Freddie Go, was the heartfelt reply of Evelyn Gancayco. "Learning should never stop – there's always a way to do it better, faster, more economical, and with improved market approval. If we don't find it today, that should only make us more excited to try again tomorrow," she affirmed. "Of course, we are very grateful for the acknowledgement that the BFAD has given us, but in true Goldilocks fashion, we can't rest on our laurels. That's a philosophy we inherited from our company's founders, and is vital for us being the industry leader," she concluded.

Given this kind of outlook, Goldilocks will undoubtedly remain the country's number one bakeshop for generations to come. **To the Cakeplant team and the entire family: Keep up the great work!**

Glitz and glamour at the 7th World Bazaar Festival!

WATCH OUT FOR A CHRISTMAS ride to fame as Worldbex Services International (WSI) features celebrity exhibitors who will showcase their niftiest products for the Yuletide season at the Celebrity Village of the 7th World Bazaar Festival, ongoing from Dec. 6 to 16 at the World Trade Center open from 12 noon to 10 p.m. from Monday to Thursday and 10 a.m. to 12 midnight from Friday to Sunday.

Meet and greet your favorite Kapamilya stars like Judy Ann Santos, KC Concepcion, Toni Gonzaga, Angel Jacob, Christine Bersola, Phoemela Baranda, Michelle Madrigal, Jodie Sta. Maria, Aiza Marquez, Gladys Reyes and Christopher Roxas, Aiza Seguerra, Mickey Ferriols and Archie Alemania, Mich Dulce, Raphael Martinez, and Bianca Lapus as they provide all kinds of products and merchandise for all kinds of needs.

Proceeds of The Celebrity Village will go to the Virlanie Foundation, a private non-sectarian child caring institution in Metro Manila that operates 12 residential homes providing shelter, food, education and love to over 1,000 disadvantaged children.

WSI founding chair Joseph Ang looks forward to another historic moment through the celebrated Chirstmas bazaar. "We hope that the 2007 World Bazaar Festival would also become an instrument for continuous progress and prosperity among enterprises and inspire them to unite for a great cause," he said.

The 11-day Christmas extravaganza will also highlight the latest quirks in fashion, books, music, handicrafts, jewelry, paper products, car accessories, home furnishing, telecommunication gadgets, among others, that are available in the local and international market.

Proceeds of the 7th World Bazaar Festival will go to the ABS-CBN Foundation Inc, a non-stock, non-profit organization that undertakes rescue and relief activities like first aid-training, rehabilitation, critical incidence stress debriefing, medical missions and outreach projects to those who are in need.

Creating an avenue for the fusion of world-class products and services for many years, WSI continues to dominate the trade scene by staging quality expositions for various industries in the country. WSI's successful run of the Manila Food and Beverage Exposition last summer, which created its own Global Village of food experts, distributors, suppliers, and franchisers from the Philippines and from all over the world, WSI has succeeded in marking a stronghold in the country's enterprise arena. As the world's different flavors and spices took a single serving at Mafbex, WSI's thrust on the food industry was realized.

For more inquiries, call WSI at 531-6350/74 or 534-3615 or fax 533-2026, or e-mail info@worldbex.com.

'We hope that the 2007 World Bazaar Festival would also become an instrument for continuous progress and prosperity among enterprises and inspire them to unite for a great cause'

Christmas is big at SM . . .

From page Q1

world famous Giant Lantern Festival on Dec. 15 at 7 p.m.

The festival is now on its 79th year, and will feature giant lanterns no less than 18 feet in diameter, and sparkling with 3,500 to 5,000 light bulbs each. Expert artisans from San Fernando's different barangays-Del Pilar, Dolores, Telabastagan, San Juan, San Felipe, San Nicolas, Sta. Lucia, and Sto. Niño-will craft the eight giant lanterns.

Spearheaded by the City Government of San Fernando, the Ligligan Parul 2007 will showcase new lantern designs conceptualized and crafted by prominent Kapampangan lantern makers. The giant lanterns will be judged according to design, color combination, and the interplay of lights and color with music.

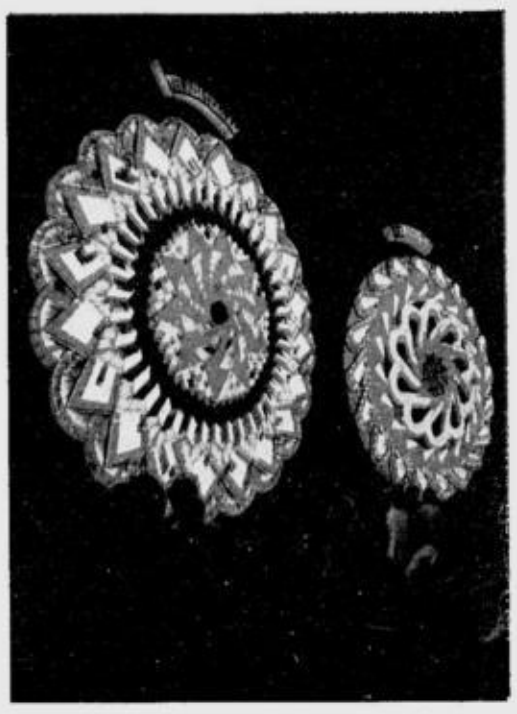
The competition will be divided into three parts. The first part will be an individual practiced display synchronized with music chosen by each barangay; the second one will be a simultaneous exhibition by two groups of five barangays each to music chosen by the festival committee. The last part will be simultaneous display of all the 10 competing giant lanterns to music preselected by the committee.

San Fernando's lantern tradition is rooted from lubenas, a religious activity in Bacolor, which began in 1904. It is said that the first lantern contest was held in honor of President Manuel Quezon and his family in the 1930s. Originally fashioned from bamboo frames, rice paper and lit by candles, these have evolved into modern giant lanterns using steel frames, bulbs, colored plastic, which are run by motors.

Also not to be missed are the Spectacular Fireworks Display at SM City Pampanga and SM City Clark. Catch these grand pyrotechnic shows on Dec. 14, 15, 22, and 29!

A toy-giving project was also launched during the Giant Santa unveiling. SM Supermalls president Annie Garcia led the symbolic turnover of gifts together with Governor Ed Panlilio and City Social Welfare Development Head Heidi Patio.

The biggest Santa Claus is in town! Made by Candellero Handicrafts, the fiberglass Santa figure stands 20 feet tall and 13 feet wide.



Giant lanterns from eight barangays that are no less than 18 feet in diameter and with 3,500 to 5,000 light bulbs each will compete in this year's Giant Lantern Festival.

GE Consumer & Industrial Appliances

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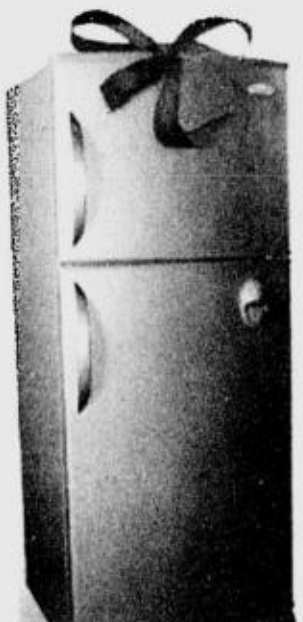
Warm reception.

If you're looking for a wedding gift that will have the couple remember you warmly for life, get a GE, the ref that's built to last and last and last. It's America's most preferred appliance brand.*

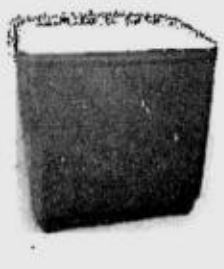
Buy selected GE products today and get a free stand fan. Hurry. Supplies are limited.**



GE imagination at work

Bar fridge

Refrigerator



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*Source Harris Poll, 2007

**Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 4157, Series of 2007.

Beauché: A promise of beauty in just 7 days

DO YOU WANT A SUPPLER, CLEARer, whiter and younger skin in just 7 days?

Then try Beauché International's remarkable line of skin care products that promises a "new you" in just a week's time. Hypoallergenic, its products range from the Skin Toner, Beauty Bar Soap, Carrot Soap, Papaya Kojic Soap, Anti-microbial and Gluta Soap, Clarifying Lotion, Exfoliating Cream, Rejuvenating Cream and Age Eraser Cream.

Beauché beauty products have been widely acclaimed by men and women who have tried them and became regular users because of the amazing and wonderful results on their complexion.

Beauché's satisfied users and patrons include the flight crews of the Philippine Airlines as well as employees of respectable banking institutions, telecommunications companies, hotels and resorts, government and private employees and endorsed even by dermatologists and medical doctors nationwide.

Beauché International is one of the most promising beauty and wellness product developers in the Philippines today. Its phenomenal rise in the skin care industry is marked by its multi-million manufacturing plant in Dasmariñas, Cavite.

Formulated and developed by a triumvirate of a licensed chemist, a pharmacist and a dermatologist in 2000, Beauché in its first year was involved and devoted to testing product efficacy on 200 individuals with varying problems and skin textures.

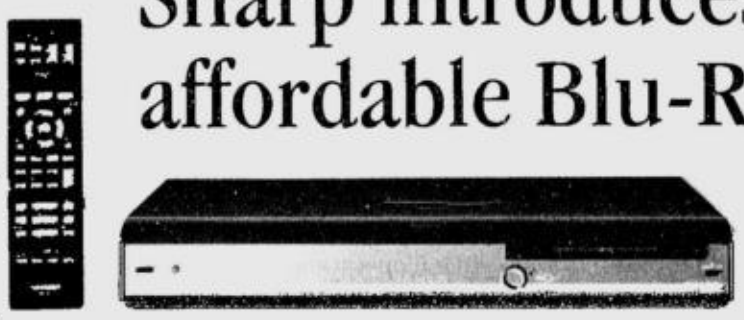
After a substantial degree of adjustments for refinement, Beauché ultimately attained perfection in 2005 and has since then considered to source out its raw materials from the United Kingdom, Germany, Austria, China and the United States, aside from the active ingredients found and produced locally.

Beauché was coined from the name of Conchita "Che" delos Reyes, president and chief executive officer of this multimillion business, whose purpose-driven vision is to gain a niche in the international market The product has gained patronage abroad and is widely distributed in Hong Kong, Japan, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States.

Indeed, Beauché International has taken tremendous leaps in the beauty and wellness industry that in just a span of five months after its establishment, the Bureau of Food and Drugs has upgraded its License to Operate (LTO) from a cosmetic trader to a toll manufacturer of cosmetic and non-cosmetic products.

For inquiries and product orders, call 0919-2049404 or 046-9732241, or visit the showroom at Amafel Building, Aguinaldo Highway, Dasmariñas, Cavite.

Sharp introduces most affordable Blu-Ray disc player



ENJOY THE HIGH DEFINITION revolution this Christmas with Sharp's BD-HP20A Blu-ray Disc player, the most affordable player in the market with an SRP of P44,998.

The BD-HP20A is capable of full high-definition 1080p video (the highest quality video mode in the market) for the most precise and realistic visual experience imaginable. It can output video signals at 24Hz, the standard frame rate for cinema content, and upscale ordinary DVDs to 1080p via HDMI.

Hard-core home theater enthusiasts will be glad to know the BD-HP20A supports the next-generation lossless audio codec, Dolby True HD (lossless, 48 kHz only) for the pristine delivery of multi-channel audio. The BD-HP20A is also compatible with Dolby Digital Plus and DTS Digital Surround to create an immersive and engaging sound stage.

The BD-HP20A boasts of having the quickest start-up from standby in 10 seconds among all players in the market and is the thinnest Blu-ray Disc player in its class at 68 mm high.

Another notable feature of the BD-HP20A is the Aquos Link, which lets users operate the player from a Sharp Aquos LCD TV remote controller: when it's time to play a disk, the input switches automatically to the player. Design mavens will love the sleek look of the player and its piano black finish as seen on popular Aquos models.

The Sharp BD-HP20A is available at leading appliance stores this Christmas season.

In a related development, Sharp Corp (Japan) recently announced its introduction of seven new recordable Blu-ray Disc players that enable recording of HDTV content and two new Aquos Blu-ray Disc players with high-capacity hard drives. Sharp is positioning these new Blu-ray players to become the digital video recorders of the 21st century.

Ariston Indesit's Sweet Christmas deal

THE METRO IS ABUZZ WITH activities all in the spirit of giving for the coming holidays.

With everyone busy with their respective office activities and household preparations for the holidays, the whole day would not be enough to cover what needs to be done. The list of people we want give gifts to, and the amount of time needed to do our shopping rounds would be enough to drive us all to exhaustion.

Like most people, we want to give the best to our loved ones. The best gifts, the best food on our "Noche Buena" table, in fact what we are really aiming for is the best of what money can buy and so much more. What better way to give to your family and yourself as well, than to give an Ariston appliance. Ariston has been the household name in Italy and is synonymous with built-in cooktops and ovens, freestanding cookers and range hoods, washers and dryers. Known its for stylish, sleek and multi-function line of stainless appliances completely built-up in Italy, Ariston by Indesit offers the latest in design and innovation.

For this season, Ariston has come up with an offer that is the sweetest deal ever! For every purchase of selected items of free standing cookers, hobs, ovens, washer and dryers, you get a free cell phone plus 0-percent interest deal. Not only are you buying a world-class appliance, you are also buying the brand that is preferred by designers.

The promo period runs from Dec. 12 to Jan. 31.

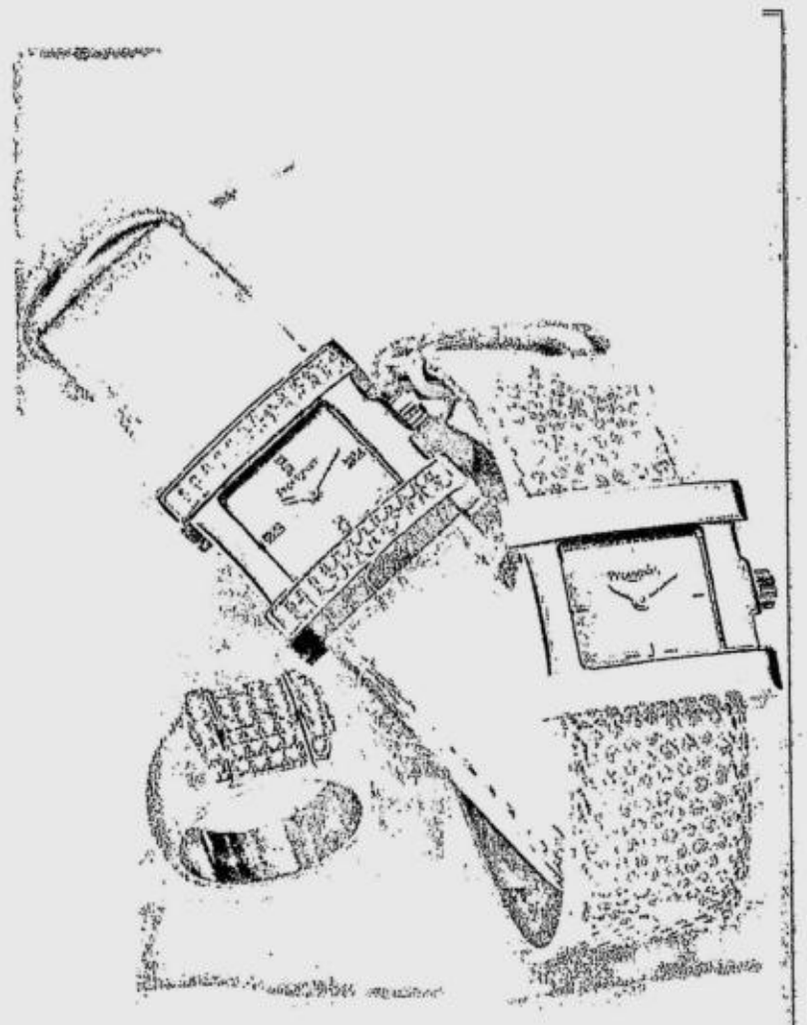
For inquiries, visit or call the Ariston Indesit showrooms: Serendra (856-2518), Shangri-La (631-8282), and at MC Home Depot, Fort Bonifacio (815-8875). The unique Ariston cell phone promo is available at all leading appliance stores nationwide.

Ariston Indesit cooks up a new treat for all its patrons-free cell phone for the holidays.

Taste the difference.

Massai Collection

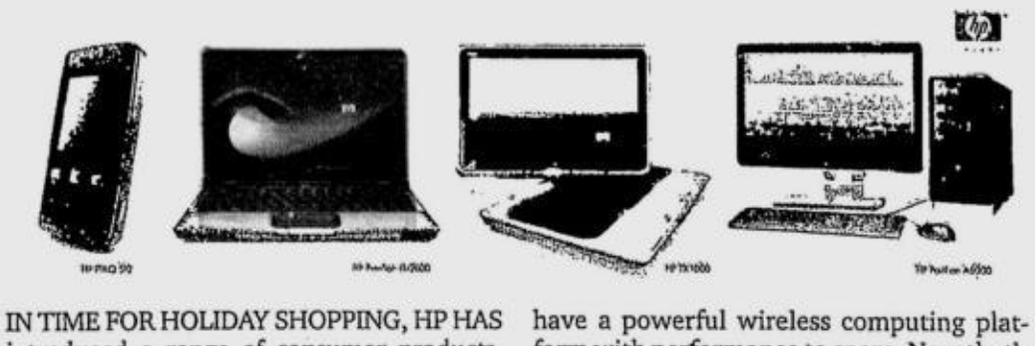
Péquignet has always been able to harmonize the Franche-Comté qualities of creativity with fine works of art. All the Péquignet creations embody French elegance with Swiss precision. One of its unique collections is the Massai. It is inspired by the Massai community in East Africa who are best known for their beautiful beadwork. They are renowned for their exemplary jewelry making which plays an essential element because body ornamentation is a significant ingredient in their rich culture. A cross between an ethnic item of jewelry and highly seductive watch amongst a young and dynamic clientele, the Massai collection counts amongst its followers women who are passionate about freedom. This restrained yet refined watch moulds itself onto the wrist, along its gentle, drawn curves. The inspired architecture of this model plays on shapes without concession so as to confirm an ardent attraction to what is beautiful.



Sorella Collection

The "top-quality design" of French watchmaking combined with "Swiss made" quality has struck a feminine note with its numerous facets. Unique, a lady has many choices and desires. By inventing this principle of interchangeability, Péquignet transcends and captures time to achieve absolute infinity of creativity. Hence this unique collection of bracelets—Sorella is the answer to all spontaneous desires and moods with its unlimited range of materials and colors.

HP unveils must-have gifts



IN TIME FOR HOLIDAY SHOPPING, HP HAS introduced a range of consumer products-from personal, stylish devices that help protect and preserve digital memories, to the ultimate in high-definition digital entertainment notebooks.

"HP offers stylishly innovative products that are at the top of everyone's wish list because they enable people to create, share, and publish content in the way that they want," said Dette Nacario, personal systems group general manager, HP Philippines. "Whether it's for work or play, HP offers best-in-class solutions for everyone's needs."

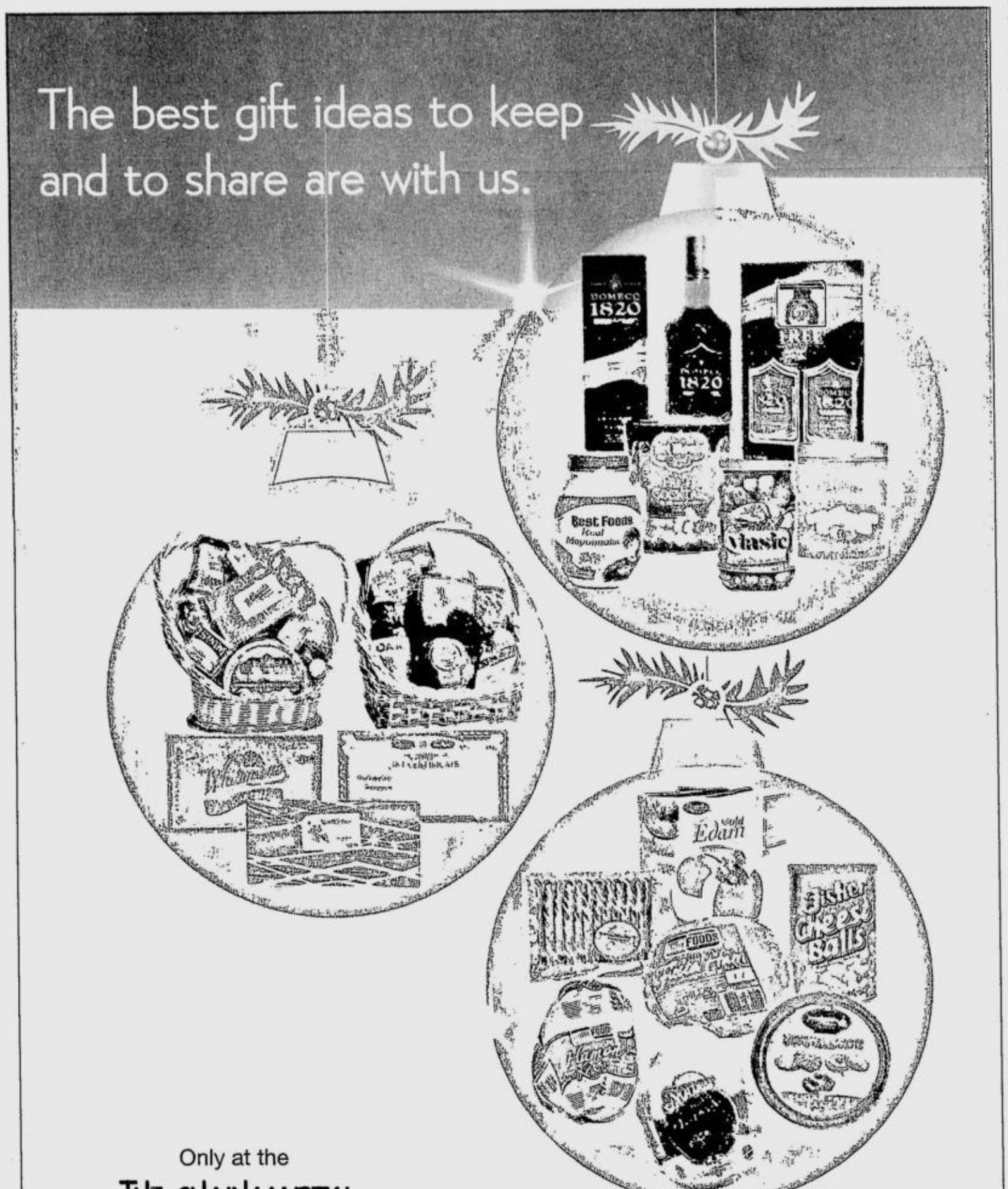
Here's some excellent gift ideas for the holiday season from HP:

HP Pavilion a6000 PC series: Perfect for photos, music, videos, and surfing fun! Bring home an alluring new HP Pavilion PC in sleek designer black (with gorgeous, luminous azure blue accents), and share stuff in a snap with its integrated 15-in-1 Card Reader and nifty 2.5in Pocket Media Drive. These affordable, attractive PCs deliver all-around performance and ease-of-use, all wrapped up in stylish designs that are packed with intuitive features, smart touches, and innovative software sure to win everyone's heart.

HP Pavilion dv2600 series Entertainment Notebook PC: For sheer uniqueness, the special edition HP Pavilion dv2600 is hard to beat. The special "verve" graphic draws inspiration from the fluidity of life-all specially laser-etched and protected by an inlaid molding process. What's more, it is a capable 14-in entertainment notebook, letting you enjoy cinematic DVD movies, eliminate online gaming foes, or burn a unique music CD compilation for friends easily. And with next generation Intel Centrino Core 2 Duo technology, you have a powerful wireless computing platform with performance to spare. Now that's the power to live life with a whole new confidence.

HP Pavilion tx1000 Entertainment Notebook PC: Work and play wherever you go with the HP Pavilion tx1000 series Entertainment Notebook PC. HP's first ultra-portable Pavilion notebook provides a new "twist" on mobility with an optional 12.1-in touch screen that can be turned 180 degrees and flatten into a slate to capture hand-written notes and drawings. Listen to your music, watch a DVD or live TV, and browse pictures with HP QuickPlay's quick-launch buttons and media controls. Kick back with the convenience of the HP Mini Remote Control that is stored in the ExpressCard slot for convenience. Take in the sounds on the integrated panel speakers or plug into the dual headphone jacks. With its smooth, high-gloss coating and a unique inlaid pattern, the HP Imprint finish offers style and greater durability and improved scratch resistance compared to traditional painted surfaces.

HP iPaq 512 Voice Messenger: HP's very first Smartphone in the Philippines, the HP iPAQ Voice Messenger offers professionals a powerful, easy-to-use device that combines the mobility of a cell phone, the capability of a handheld organizer, contact of a push e-mail device, and the power of an office phone system. Highly mobile and business-centric, the HP iPAQ 512 Voice Messenger is a compact and power-packed smartphone that allows business customers to stay in touch and on top of their day. In addition to convenient voice control, it features voice over Internet protocol (VoIP) capabilities, "push" email and the latest Windows Mobile 6 operating system. With up to six and a half hours of continuous talk time on a fully charged battery, the HP iPAQ 512 Voice Messenger also leads the competition in handheld battery life.



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Dec. 25 (Christmas Day) Closed • Jan. 1 (New Year's Day) Closed

Oishi Cuckoo Bag

BELLS ARE RINGING, MISTLETOES ARE hung, Christmas trees are laid out; the season of Christmas cheer has arrived! It's time again for Oishi's annual Cuckoo Bag, a Christmas shopper's dream! A colorful bag packed with 14 of your favorite Oishi snacks. This year's Cuckoo Bag brings Oishi even to your workplace with collectibles such as mouse pads, clip stands, picture frames, and so much more. This is a delightful gift for everyone. Oishi Cuckoo Bags are now available in SM Supermarkets, Puregold, Robinsons Supermarkets, Landmark, Shopwise, and Waltermart, among others for only P90.

Christmas decors you can afford!

FEEL THE HOLIDAY CHEER with warm hues of red, blue and green combined with touches of gold, metal and silver. Deck your homes with Christmas colors this season with elegant pieces you can afford. There's a place where you can get the Christmas spirit without hurting your budget.

In Tutuban Mall in Recto, Manila, you can find all the Christmas decors suited for any venue with almost half the price compared to the regular malls. Choose among different colors and height of Christmas trees, bells, poinsettias, garlands and Christmas lights. Shopping for Christmas decors have never been this fun and affordable.

Here are some stylish Christmas bargains from Tutuban Cluster Building at the Ground Floor that you would like to try for your own home, restaurant, office or venue.

Decors galore at Tutuban Mall, Cluster Building, Ground Floor

Choose your favorite Christmas tree depending on color and size. Price ranges from P280 to P13,000

GIVE LOVE!
HOLIDAY 2007

Fresh, Hot and Merry!

Everyone's wish list comes true!

There's a new Christmas. It's not just a holiday. It's a way of life. And Robinsons Department Store celebrates with lots of love. Everyone gets presents: the hottest fashion for women, the latest trends for men, the newest accessories for kids, the best bargains for home, and so much more.

Live it. Love it.
Everyone gets to give love this season only at Robinsons Department Store.

A lot to love at Robinsons Department Store

WOMEN · MEN · CHILDREN · HOME

Robinsons Department Store

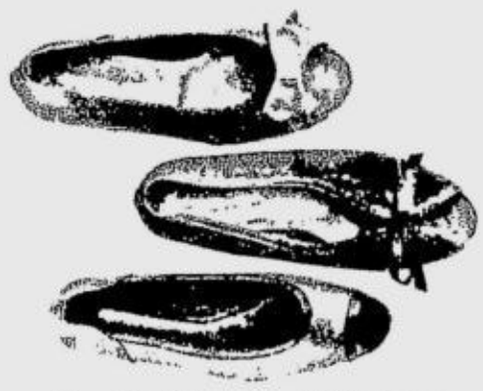
R-2

Class keeps her at the edge. Sophistication sets her apart. A little holiday gives her cheer. Why? Because it's another reason for shopping. This season ushers in the finest no less. From every day tops, to best-fit jeans, Robinsons Department Store gives her the best. Because this season, we aren't just celebrating the holiday. We're celebrating women.

Wrangler classic knit-sports collared shirt (comes in yellow, pink and white) P649.75

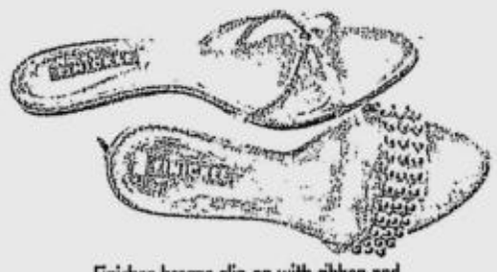
Company B t-shirt P199.75

Mario D' Boro checkered wedges P499.00



Shoes Unlimited bronze flats collection P399.75

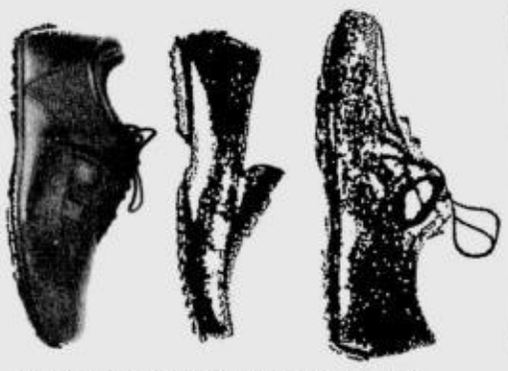
B Club patent leather stilettos P799.75



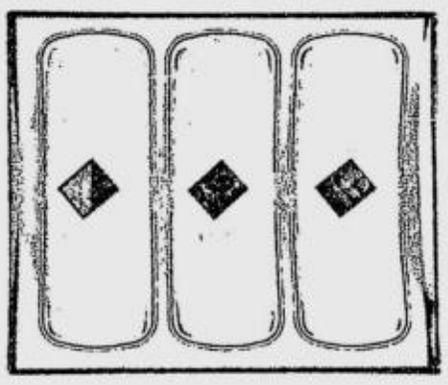
Finickee bronze slip-on with ribbon and bronze sandals with gold detail P999.75

Wrangler polo shirt gift packs P749.75

Company B navy t-shirt P349.75, checkered polo P679.75, cargo shorts P849.75



Swatch men's casual leather shoes Jack P2,000.00, Versailles P2,200.00, Sicily P2,000.00

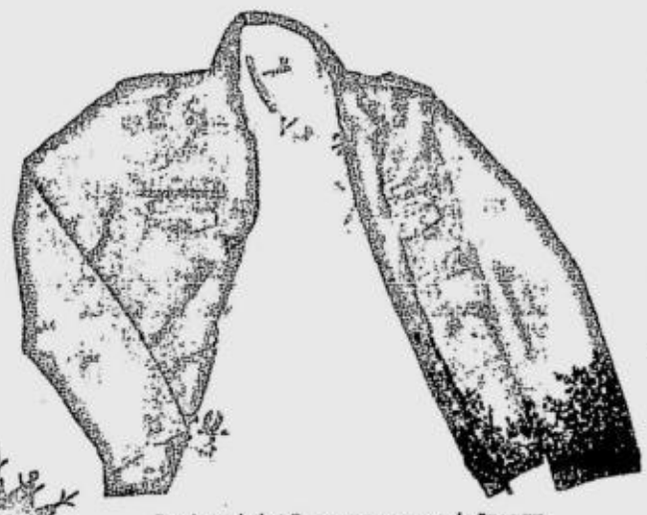


Armando Caruso handkerchief set P139.75 - P219.75

Timex Expedition 46681 P3,490.00

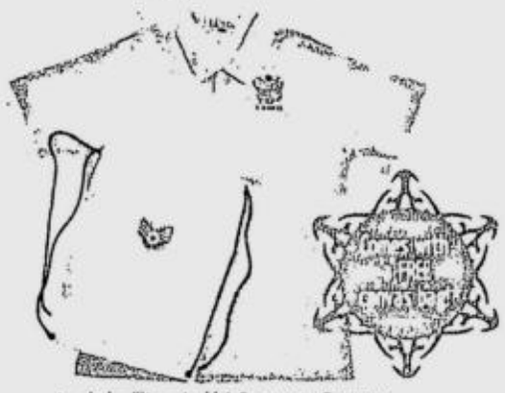
RRJ t-shirt P299.75

The face of the holiday is changing. And so are men. Metro is the new slick. Mod is the new rugged. Style is in. Meet the man of today. Tasteful, different, and open. A little trimming, cologne, and clean socks, Robinsons Department Store gives that warm buzz and merry afterglow for today's man and more.



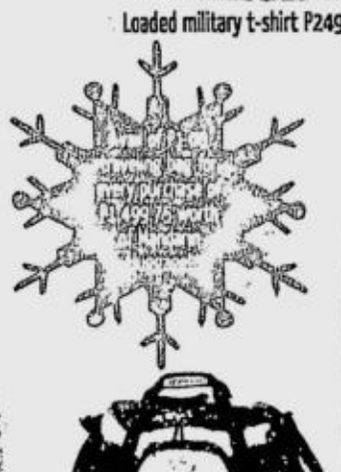
Ego Jeans jacket P1,199.75, woven polo P749.75

Portside graphic t-shirt P199.75

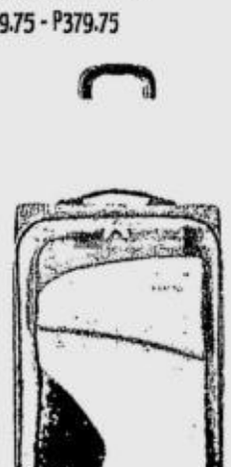


Loaded military t-shirt P249.75 - P379.75

Portside tank top P179.75



Mandarin black trolley with red pockets P1,650.00



Skytravel medium black pinstriped luggage P2,199.75

Patriot 20" dark green luggage P1,399.75

Robinson

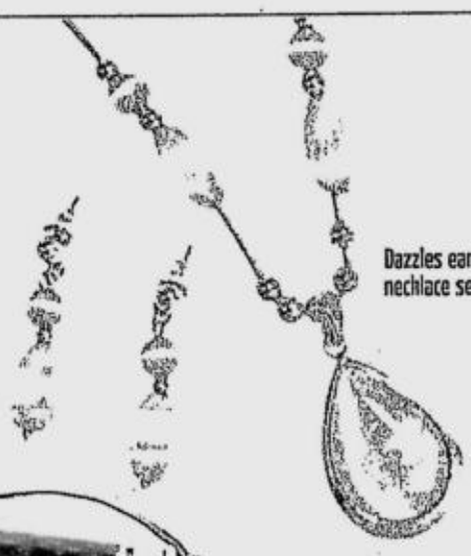
Pre-Christmas Sale

on December 14*, 15* and 16, 2007

Revlon 3D Extreme Mascara P675.00

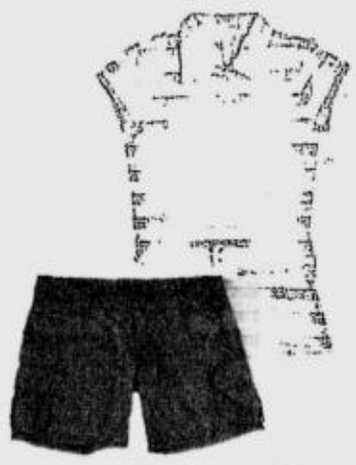
Ever Bilena gift pack P179.00

Angelenes long necklace P119.75 - P149.75



Dazzles earrings and necklace set P299.75

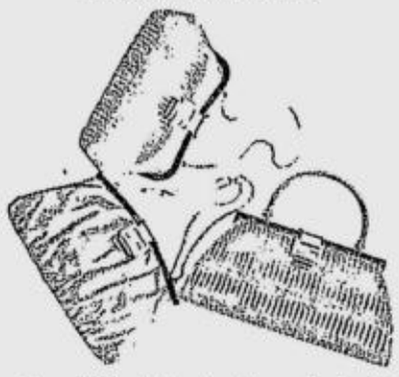
RRJ crew neck printed top P379.75 - P399.75



Red Girl striped tee with belt P579.75, shorts with pleated pockets P599.75

Paris Hilton Heiress glamour set P3,250.00

Secosana chocolate brown and bronze handbag P1,399.75



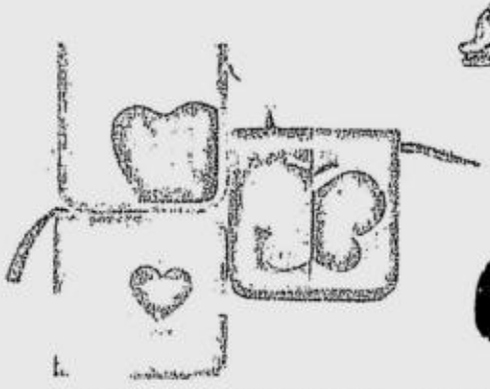
Crisan gold kiss lock snake skin evening bag P420.00, gold Swarovski kiss lock evening bag P500.00, silver Swarovski kiss lock evening bag P375.00

Freego denim pants with embroidery P849.75

Crissa skinny jeans with embroidery P779.75

Advance Stationery Gift Set P49.75 and P99.75

Sterling Kids – paper dolls, game boards P99.75



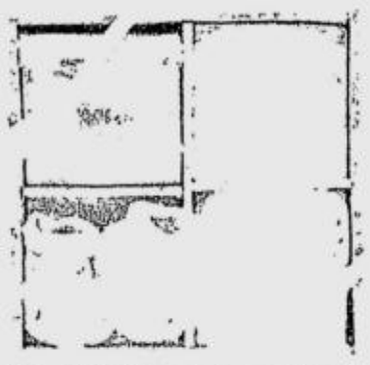
Sapphire CD case (Heart, Apple, Butterfly) P109.75 - P119.75

Barbie shoes collection Caterina boots P799.75 - P899.75, Bona flats P649.75 - P699.75, Bethea peep-toe wedges P799.75 - P849.75

Fisher Price Disney Princess slippers P119.75

Mario D' Boro girls' floral wedges P549.75

Angel's Breath gift pack (white teddy bear with Angel's Breath soap, perfume and powder) P299.75



Coral Babies HOT BABE 4-pc playtime set of cap, booties, t-shirt and diaper cover) P299.75

Disney Princess gift bags with accessories P199.75

All About Kids t-shirt and shorts set P199.75 per set

B+ Active t-shirt P199.75

Minnie Mouse spaghetti top and capri jeans P479.75 - P849.75

Babyflo personal grooming kit with free diary (includes shampoo, oil, powder and cotton buds) P100.00

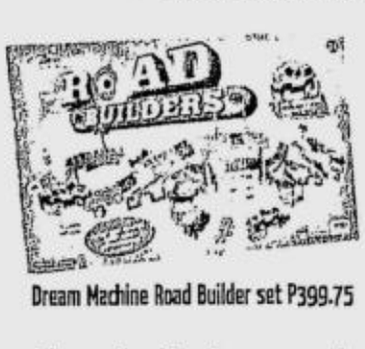
Available only in selected Robinsons Department Stores

Barbie 12-inch Dancing Princesses Vanity set P1,699.75

Notebook Computer P1,249.75

Barbie Fairy Bubble Play Vanity set P1,499.75

Rubik's 3 X 3 shrink wrapped P199.75, Rubik's 4 X 4 Hexagonal P499.75, Rubik's 5 X 5 Hexagonal P599.75, Rubik's Rev Elec game P699.75



Dream Machine Road Builder set P399.75

Everyone is a kid this season. But more so the twinks and tykes. Toys for the boys, and curls for the girls, it's a fun mix of wish lists and gifts every child is waiting for. The perfect Christmas comes year after year. This time around, Robinsons Department Store makes sure it's another perfect one for the kids, and the kids at heart.

* Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 3475 series of 2007 ** Per DTI-NCR Permit No.3495 series of 2007

ns Department Store

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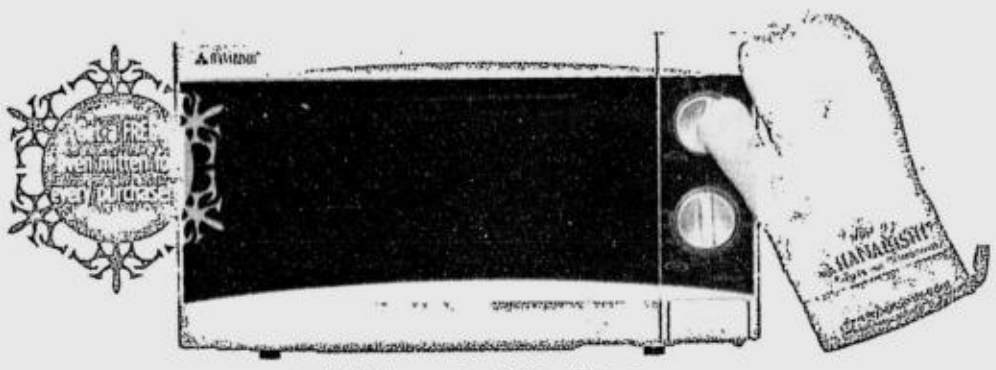
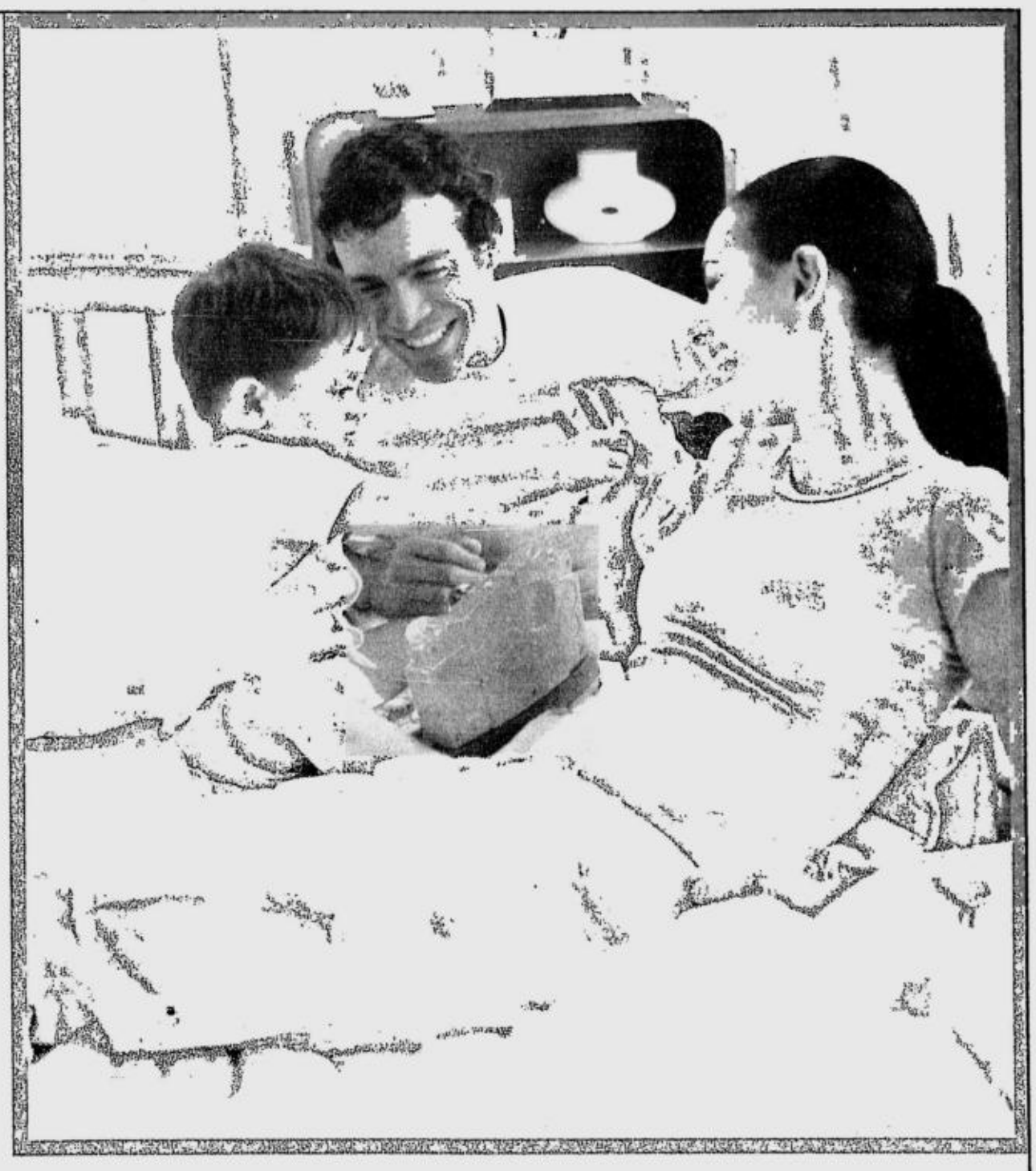
Sunnex Primrose Enamel 5-pc. cookware set P3,369.75

Sunnex 6-pc. knife set P1,699.75

Hanabishi Coffee Maker (HCM-20T) P620.00



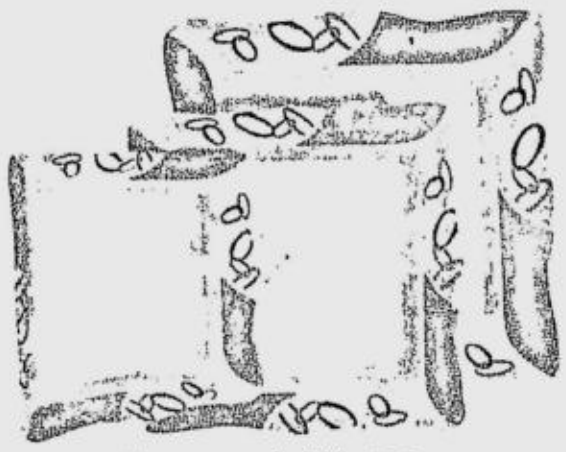
Hanabishi Microwave Oven (HMO-17MS) P2,800.00



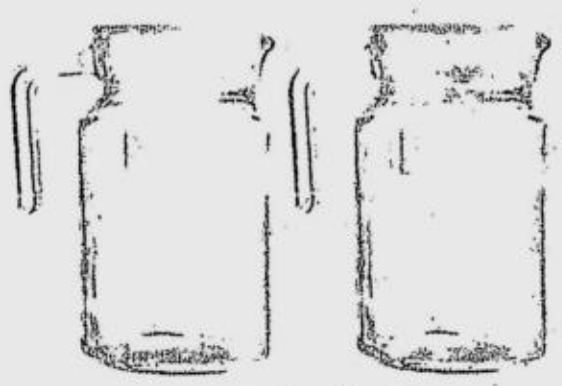
A reason for the season? Decorations. From frosting, fluffs, and shinies, our homes get dressed up in Yuletide glam. You choose the mood. You choose the color. You choose the lights. Robinsons Department Store gives you color to glam, frolic to fab, jolly to holy. Christmas is, just like our home, what we make of it.

Mug gift set P149.75

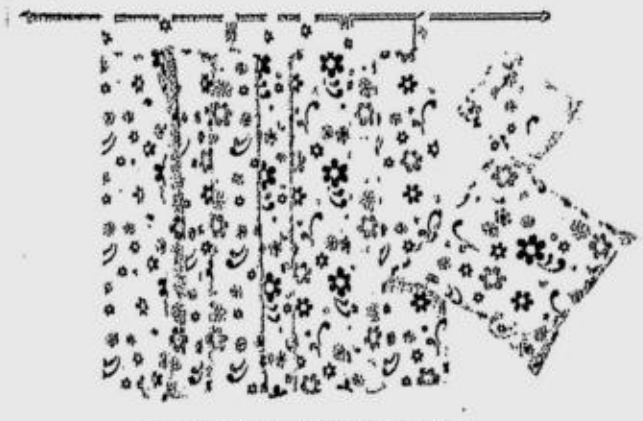
Ultrawhite servingware P199.75 - P334.75 (sold separately)



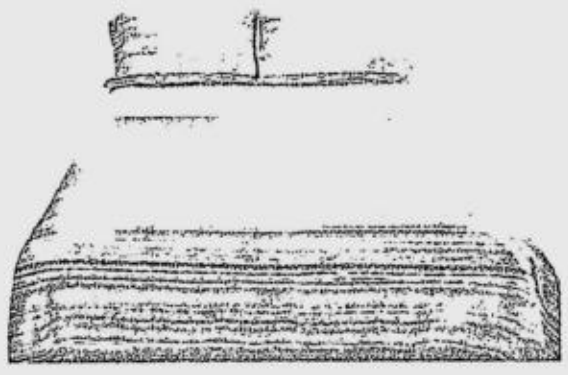
Nipponware 3-pc. floral dish set P180.00



2-pc. jug set P119.75



Home Essentials Kitchen Floral Collection
(Kitchen curtain P249.75, printed tea towel P49.75, throw pillowcase P99.75, also available: apron P149.75, ref. towel P49.75, gloves P49.75, pot holder P29.75 and printed chair pad P129.75)



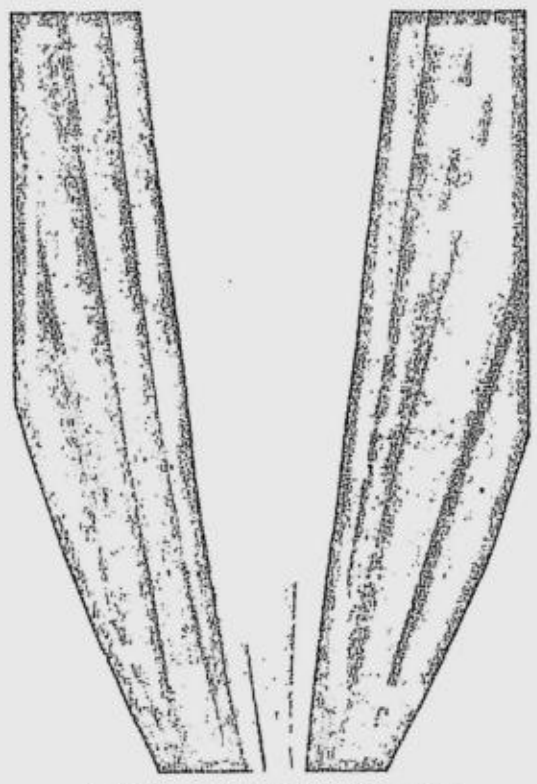
Home Essentials 4-pc. bedsheet set
(King P3,799.50, Queen P3,199.50, Full P3,099.50, Twin P2,999.50 (less 50%)

Margaret Muir Amelie Collection: 2-pc. pillowcase P999.75, 2-pc. white cushion cover P999.75, twin duvet cover P3,999.75/full duvet cover P4,499.75/ queen duvet cover P5,499.75/king duvet cover P5,999.75

Candle and oil burner gift set P199.75

Pringles snacks P60.00 - P80.00

Sprite, Royal Tru Orange, Coke and Coke light in can 330mL P19.00



Pauline's Gormey 32 Red - P995.00 (less 50%)
Pauline's Gormey 32 Beige - P995.00 (less 50%)

A lot to love at Robinsons Department Store

*Promo Period: October 1, 2007 to January 31, 2008. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 3429 Series of 2007

Robinsons Galleria Flagship Store
Robinsons Malls · Waltermart Malls · Nepo Malls · Tutuban Center · Malabon Citisquare · Metropolis Star Alabang · Festival Mall Alabang · Limketkai Mall Cagayan De Oro

Robinsons Department Store

LIFESTYLE

An Evening of Love Sparks at Pond's Fete D'amour

The Grandest Set-up of Manila's Most Eligible

Eligible bachelors and bachelorettes in the metro were whisked away to an evening of infinite possibilities at the recent Pond's - Fete d'Amour: The Grandest Set-up of Manila's Most Eligible.

This special by-invitation-only assembly of singles was Pond's Flawless White's way of setting the stage for romance. Playing the role of love's helping hand, Pond's Flawless White recognizes the sacred link between the everyday quest for beauty and the life-affirming quest for romance.

Mutya Laxa, Unilever's Marketing Manager for Skin, explained, "At Pond's, we know that beauty is, in fact, the starting point of romance. If you look at the inner workings of a man's mind, attraction starts with the physical, then it moves to intellectual then emotional attraction. We understand the pivotal role that beauty plays in finding true romance. And we made it our mission at Pond's to give the beauty that brings romance to a woman's life."

Throughout the evening, hopefuls in love had a ball with the various activities that were pleasantly familiar and exciting. The lovely Ria Romero received gorgeous pink tulips from Manila's Most Eligible Derrick Santos through Pink n Petals, a garden of roses and tulips where guests can send blooms to the one who caught their eye. Single men extended a sweet gesture by sending chocolate confections from Sweets For My Sweet, a chocolate bar where people sent a box of sweets for their belles of the ball, and statuesque model Patty Betita was just giddy when a few boxes of sweets came her way.

Cupids Rissa Mananquil and Paolo Trillo flocked to Love Seek, an oracle reading corner where soothsayers foretold their love future. Heartbeat was a dedication area where singles could dedicate love tunes to be sung by the Akafellas. Heart Arrest was a private area where would-be couples could have intimate conversations. Among those "Two-gether" were guests Charina Sarte and James Laurel. While bound by a pair of hand cuffs, twosomes chatted about anything and everything under the evening stars. Pink-a-Drink was a pink beverage bar where guests could send a drink to the ones they were attracted to; while Message Send was a message area for singles to post little notes to those they secretly admired; and of course, the Pond's Flawless White 7-Day Challenge Center was where everyone discovered the way to visibly lightened skin in 7 days.

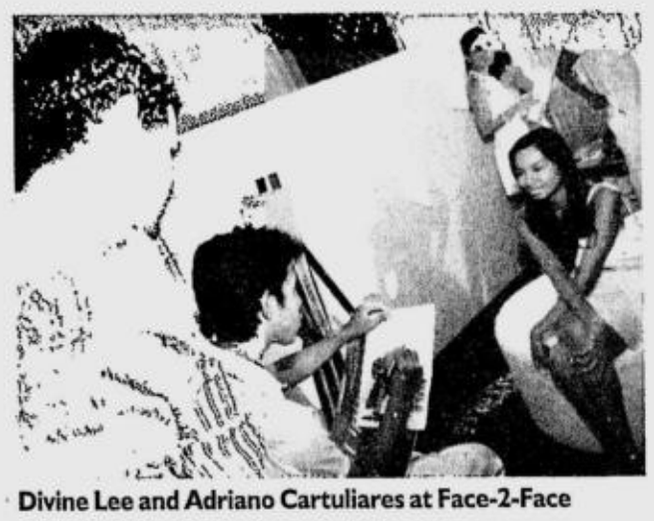
Pond's gave away special awards as well: Margot Tan was awarded by Pond's Brand Manager Renel Cecilio and Assistant Brand Manager Meryll Yan, the Pond's trip for two to the most romantic city, Paris! Other awards included Flawless Match to Tina Perez and Aaron Litonjua; and Prettiest in Pink award to the gorgeous Mia Ayesa.

Pond's, as love's ally, also enlisted the help of cupids to break the ice to awkward introductions. Among those hard at play in match-making were Carmina Sanchez and Mike Jacob, Anna Palabyab and fiancée Raymond Rufino, Divine Lee and Adriano Cartuliares, Rissa Mananquil and Paolo Trillo, and Pepper Tehankee.

Pond's also launched its latest groundbreaking product during this lovely evening. Pond's Flawless White Visibly Lightening Day Cream, made with the best in skin lightening technology, visibly lightens dark spots and blemishes for clearer, more beautiful skin in just 7 days!

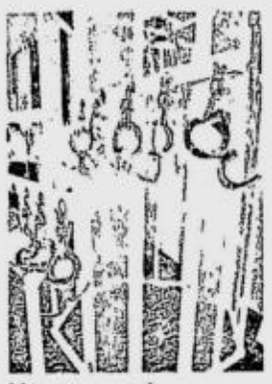
Truly one of a kind, this magical evening of intimate conversations and meaningful encounters brought back the good old deeds of romantic gestures. As Pond's Fete d'Amour proves, chivalry in this day and age is still very much alive!

The gang's all here at Picture Perfect!


Divine Lee and Adriano Cartuliares at Face-2-Face

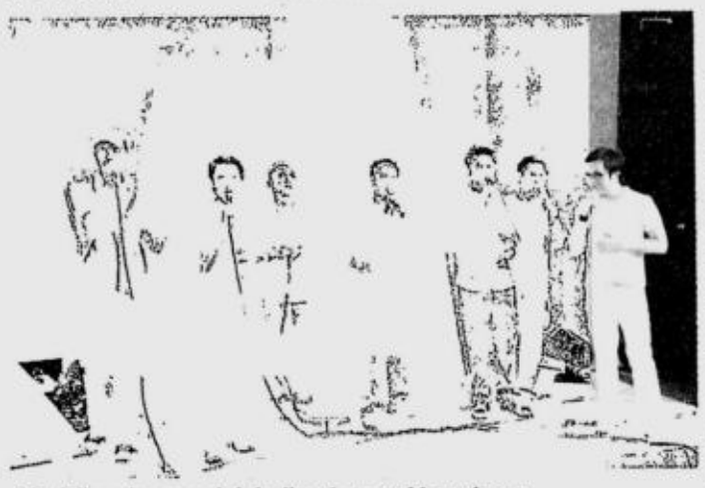
Luke Jickain at Pink 'n Petals

Vince Garcia and Rona Vergel de Dios at Love Seek


Heart arrest!

King Stehmeier and Helena Belmonte at Message Send

Winners of the Pond's Flawless Match, Aaron Litonjua and Tina Perez with hosts of the night Tim Yap and Sam Oh

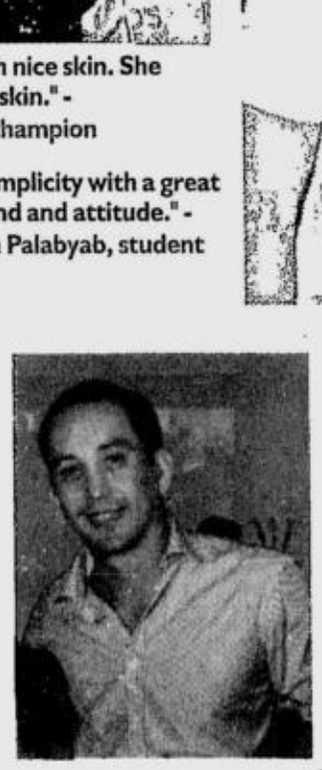

Akafellas sing special dedications at Heartbeat

Pond's Brand Manager Renel Cecilio, winner of the Trip to Paris Margot Tan and Pond's Assistant Brand Manager Meryll Yan

What attracts you to a woman?

"A pretty and sexy girl with nice skin. She should have smooth clean skin." - Matteo Guidicelli, racing champion

"Simplicity with a great mind and attitude." - Ian Palabyab, student


"I like women with a natural and radiant personality. It's important that they're confident and fun to be with." - Mike Jacob, businessman

"I go for mestizas, so I always look for flawless white complexion." - Rey Joson, windsurfing champion/model/student

"I like a girl who is smart, funny and can carry herself with confidence while being warm and friendly." - Adriano Cartuliares, model

"A woman's smile attracts me the most. It and adds vibrancy to her beauty." - Marco Morales, singer/Showboys

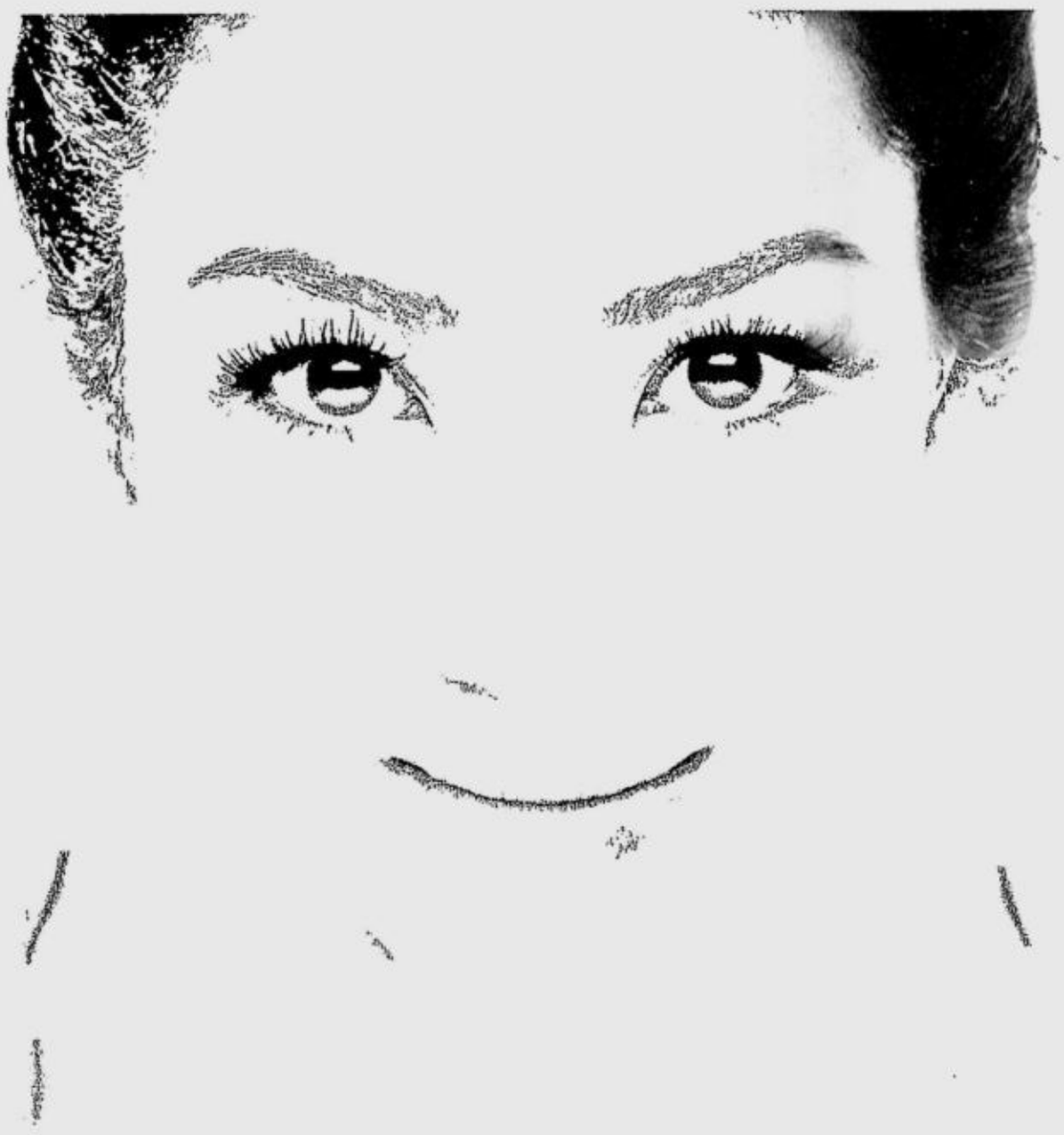
"Someone independent and strong enough to stand on her own yet has enough vulnerability to be with someone. Looks is like the icing on a cake to a great personality." - Carlos Concepcion, singer/Showboys

"It's how she all comes together - personality, appeal, looks, aura, intelligence, attitude - just take my fiancée Anna as an example of an attractive woman who comes together perfectly! And yes, her flawless skin helps a lot!" - Raymond Rufino, real-estate executive

"I'm attracted to women with a subtle confidence - knowing she has a lot to offer but is not a show off. Looking good definitely helps that confidence, making it seem effortless. You can spot that from afar and it only gets better as you get closer." - Sanjay Chandunal, model

"I find a woman who has a big appetite and who can be aloof sometimes attractive. Great appearance makes her stand out and shows that she knows how to take care of herself." - Joseph Salomon, singer/Showboys

"Sweet smell, sweet smile, sweet personality. And smooth fair skin would be sweet!" - Carlo Adorador, model/athlete



Pond's Flawless White™ Visibly Lightening Day Cream

Pond's Flawless White™ Visibly Lightening Day Cream is specially formulated for Asian skin to visibly lighten dark spots and blemishes in just 7 days!

Pond's Flawless White's 7 Day Promise

Pond's continues in its mission to innovate with its breakthrough technology and products to meet the woman's quest for ideal beauty. As the pioneer in skin lightening, it continues to offer products of the highest caliber.

After three years of research and testing at the Pond's Institute, the number one brand in the Philippines for skin lightening proudly introduces Pond's Flawless White Visibly Lightening Day Cream. It is specially formulated for Asian skin and visibly lightens and reduces dark spots and blemishes in just 7 days.

What sets Pond's Flawless White apart? Its specialized VAO-B3 complex - the new Vitamin E, Allantoin, and optics powdered B3 .

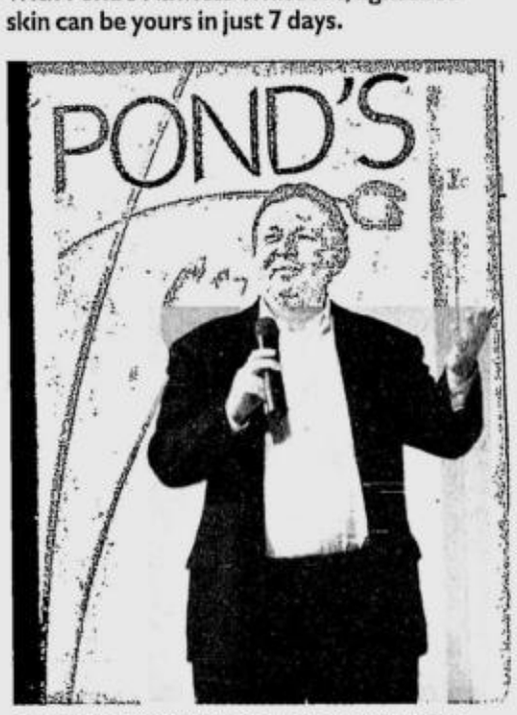
VAO-B3's building blocks are: Vitamin E, a potent fat-soluble typically found in nuts, olives, derived oils, and corn that delivers anti-oxidant benefits and effectively fights UV induced pigmentation; Allantoin, a bioactive soothing agent that boosts skin renewal for optimal skin radiance and provides protection from the sun's UV rays; Optics System, a breakthrough system that delivers brightening and evening-out effects that instantly makes skin look naturally radiant; and Vitamin B3, a key ingredient in Pond's skin lightening technology that compacts and prevents the migration of melanin from the lower to the upper layers of the skin, thus delivering visibly lighter skin. Also known as Niacinamide, this ingredient was first discovered and patented by Unilever for the Asian consumer. All four ingredients combine to deliver the best in skin lightening treatment.

Michael Cheney, the Pond's Institute's Global Director for Skin care, speaks of this revolutionary product and explains, "Our revolutionary Vitamin B3 technology controls and improves skin pigmentation caused by melanin deep within the skin; giving you lighter, more radiant looking skin. Also, VAO-B3 works on all layers of the skin. Hence, it can deliver visible results in just 7 days."

The Pond's Flawless White Day Cream can deliver the 7-day promise of brighter skin and reduced dark spots and blemishes on its own. But for that beautiful glow and a whitening boost, use it together with the whole Pond's Flawless White range: Pond's Flawless White Deep Whitening Facial Foam, Pond's Flawless White Re-Brightening Night Treatment, Pond's Flawless White Visibly Lightening Daily Lotion, Pond's Flawless White Anti-Spot Intensive Whitening Serum, Pond's Flawless White Light Infusing Under-Eye Cream, Pond's Flawless White Vitamin Soak Lightening, and Pond's Flawless White Perfect Finish 2-Way Foundation Powder.

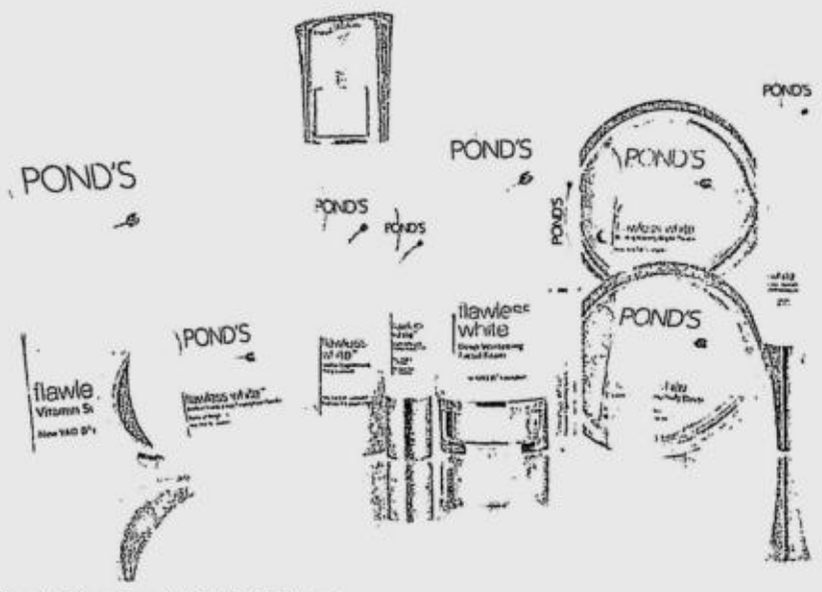
Take the 7-day promise of beauty with Pond's Flawless White.

With Pond's Flawless WhiteTM, lightened skin can be yours in just 7 days.



Pond's Institute's Global Director for Skin Care Michael Cheney

Pond's is all about bringing romance into your life through beautiful skin



The Pond's Flawless WhiteTM Range

7 Days To Love

Pond's Flawless WhiteTM's 7 Days To Love campaign is a romantic journey that takes you to the beautiful beaches of Boracay, Philippines, to introduce you to Pond's Flawless WhiteTM's breakthrough technology for beautiful skin.

Along with Pond's Flawless WhiteTM, you can experience the power of beautiful skin to attract love. The story line revolves around a sweet little love team, Paolo and Sheena, who fall in love, but because of fate, they are destined to be apart, and all they have to remember each other by is a locket.

Five years later, the romance begins to blossom as Paolo sees a girl who looks like Sheena. Will he follow the love he had lost before, or will he move on and let true love pass him by, or they keep each other locked?

As with every journey, there are roadblocks and challenges on the journey to find true love. And Pond's would like us all to share in this romantic quest for a beautiful glow. Because in finding Pond's reassures us that finding true love needs a helping hand and Pond's enables this for women all over the world.

Allow Pond's, the pioneer in skin lightening in the Philippines, to invite you to be part of Pond's Flawless White's story and help guide women in her path to love.

To find out how the story unveils, watch out for Pond's Flawless WhiteTM's next episodes...

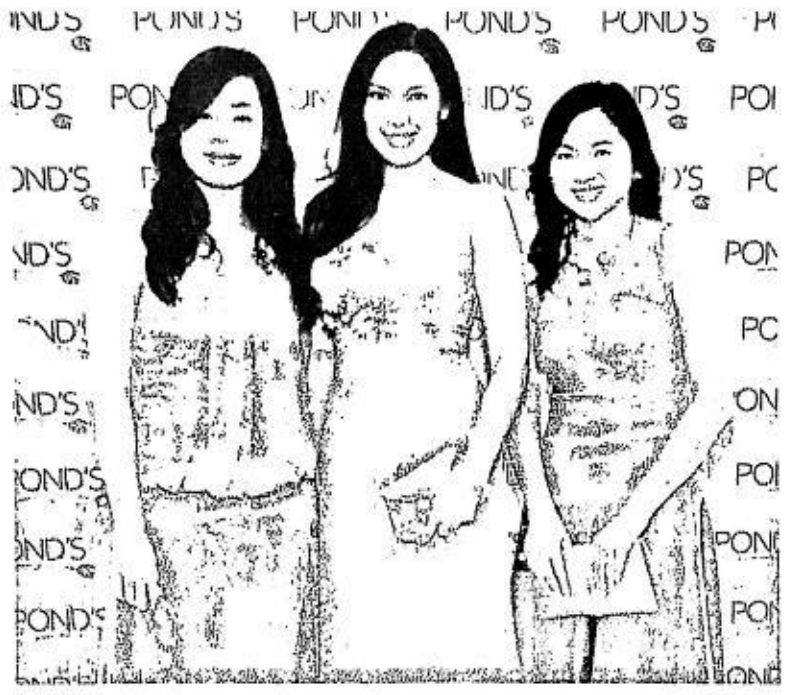
Romance is in the air

At the recent Pond's Fete d'Amour, The Grandest Set-Up of Manila's Most Eligible-a unique cocktail event-gathered Manila's most dashing and eligible singles. Undeniably, beauty and romance filled the air.

The Peninsula Manila's Rigodon Ballroom was decked with dainty pink and white blooms-a perfect setting for the desirable bachelors and bachelorettes. This posh by-invitation-only get-together hosted by Pond's, the leading name in skin lightening, had that certain je ne sais quoi to keep people reminiscing that enchanted eve of meaningful encounters.

Of course, it was also an evening of stimulating conversations and good fun. Among those having a great time were Bossa Nova princess Sitti, accessories designer Happy David, stylephiles Peaches Aberin, Dawn Balagot, Michelle Pamintuan, Abba Napa, the Kitty Girls, Helena Belmonte, design mavens Mich Dulce and Kate Torralba, Lala Sotto, Gem Padilla, Patty Betita, Cacay Moras, acclaimed actress Pinky Amador and race car sensation Gaby dela Merced. The guys were in full force, too -- Bruno Folster, Matteo Guidicelli, Francis Flores, actor and host JM Rodriguez, Model Sanjay Chandumal, Ricky Delgado, debonairs Santi Picornell, Luke Jickain, King Stehmeier and so much more.

Indeed it was a rare gathering of Manila's A-list bachelors and bachelorettes-a good brew of romance, scintillating talk, good fun and chic ambiance. Couldn't get any better than that. Pond's Fete d'Amour proved that good old-fashioned romance is the best time barrier.



Pond's Assistant Brand Manager Meryll Yan, Unilever Marketing Manager for Skin Mutya Laxa and Pond's Brand Manager Renel Cecilio

Unilever Phils Managing Director for Home Care, Skin & Deos Dondi Gomez and Francis Flores

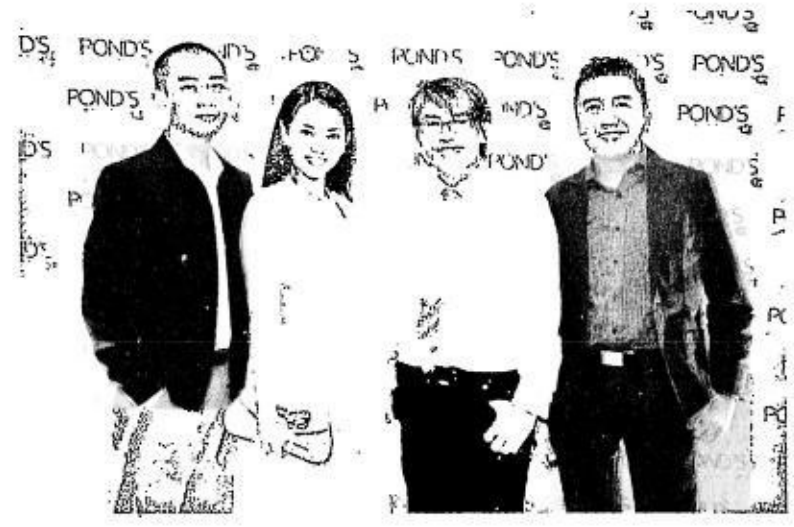
Kitty Girls Veronica Scott, Nicole Deen, Ayanna Oliva and Jocelyn Oxlave flank Mega World's Kevin Tan

Unilever VP for Corporate Development Chito Macapagal, Pond's Assistant Brand Manager Meryll Yan and Unilever Chairman Sanjiv Mehta

Ogilvy & Mather Global Pond's VP Richard Clegg and Unilever Global Marketing Director for Pond's David Steele

Dioselle Ching, Marco Danga, Dianne Tan, Luigi Guerrero and Simoun Ferrer

Cupids Raymond Rufino, Anna Palabyab, Carmina Sanchez, Pepper Teehankee, Rissa Mananquil, Paolo Trillo, Divine Lee and Adriano Cartuliares



Unilever's Ernest Acar, Michelle Sta. Catalina and Jeremiah Ty and Clint Raypon

Melissa Fernandez, Peaches Aberin and Mon Osmena

Nino Barbers, Michelle Pamintuan and Carlo Trillo

Dindi de Leon and Dominic Uy

Lei Feranil, William Yeh and Pia Campos

Christine San Diego, Martin Arnaldo, Pinky Amador and Xavier Btesh

Amanda Nograles and Happy David

Derrick Santos and Ria Romero

Angela Reyes, Sophie Domingo, Alyanna Martinez, Lala Rosales and Trina Martinez

James Cassels, Patty Betita, Kim Park and Ron Svenson

Simon Askjer and Kirby Basken

Sitti

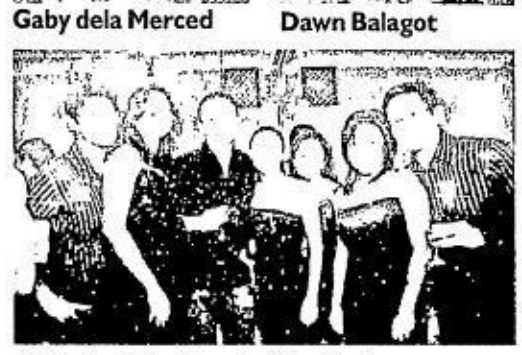
Apples Aberin-Sadhwani

Marcus Fernandes and Hillary Choo

Alia Nahas and Leiko Usuki

Gaby dela Merced

Dawn Balagot



Chris Badiola, Gem Padilla, Ernie Nepomuceno, Joanne Duque, Malu Carlos, Dina and Neil Salang

Lala Sotto and Mich Dulce

Divine Lee, Charina Sarte and Tracy Eboy Cruz

Pond's 7-Day Challenge Center

Tessa Prieto-Valdes

Mia Borromeo

7-Day Flawless White Challenge

Sally Varias

Alyanna Martinez

Lorraine Belmonte

Michelle Cruz

Isabella Sarmiento

Cacay Moras and Lisa Tan

Abba Napa

At the 7-Day Challenge Center set up during the Pond's Fête d'Amour: The Grandest Set-up of Manila's Most Eligible, Pond's beauty experts helped assess the current conditions and needs of the skin. The Pond's Flawless White center featured a Skin Fairness device that shows proof of Pond's Flawless White's efficacy.

Assisted by beauty experts, the fashionable Alyanna Martinez, L'Opera Restaurant's Abba Napa, interior designer and stylestar Tessa Prieto-Valdes and Mega Publishing Group's Lorraine Belmonte, fashionistas had their skin tone measured before and after application of Pond's Flawless White.

Guests also saw the instant improvement in their skin tone. So they were definitely eager to take home new Pond's Flawless White.

Pond's Brand Manager Renel Cecilio explained, "The Pond's Flawless White new breakthrough VAO-B3 is designed for maximum skin lightening performance. In clinical studies, 9 out of 10 women showed positive skin lightening effect in just 7 days."

Watch out for the Pond's Flawless White 7-Day Challenge Center coming soon to a mall near you and discover the way to visibly lightened skin in just 7 days.

LIFESTYLE

The Ultimate in Viewing Experience

Enjoy the Samsung SlimFit TV's brilliant display of colors.

SAMSUNG Electronics has always been passionate about enriching consumers' lifestyles through its superb and unparalleled technology. This year, Samsung does it once again through a new and exciting line-up worthy of being dubbed the ultimate in viewing experience!

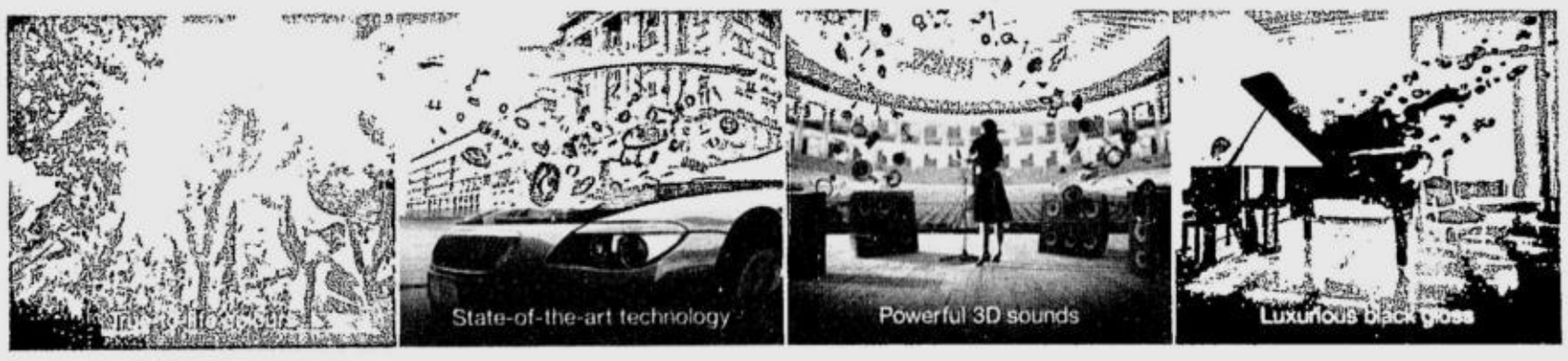
Samsung has enjoyed supremacy in the HD market, and has further explored its great potentials by taking initiatives to cultivate and expand the market for its range of HD products. Latest statistics for Southeast Asia and Oceania have pointed to Samsung taking the leading position in LCD and flat-panel TVs in the second half of 2006 both in terms of value and units. Flat-panel TVs include LCD and plasma TVs, which are the two key TV categories that offer HD.

To achieve even greater heights, Samsung provides the needs of the premium high end market with products combining innovative technology and stylish design, while ensuring the benefits of its innovations can be enjoyed by all with its comprehensive range of products catering to different consumer budgets. One such focus product is the SlimFitTM TV series, the new industry standard in CRT TV that boasts a form factor up to 30% slimmer than its usual counterparts while providing superior picture definition.

Samsung's premium Z57 or SlimFit TV comes in a classy design that is close to one-third thinner than traditional CRT TVs. It features the nano pigment 1080i/480p HD picture tube to give more natural and vivid picture quality. It is a work of art that combines the shades of brilliant flower petals, the glorious intricacies of precision engineering, the grand sounds of a music hall and the luxurious black gloss of a grand piano.

With its slim design and premium high gloss black colour finish, the elegant and space saving SlimFit TV is designed to integrate harmo-

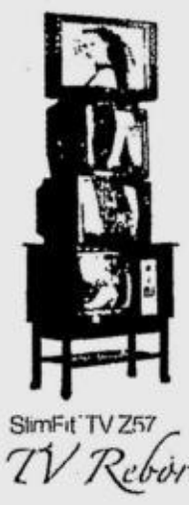
THE ULTIMATE/ T2



SAMSUNG SlimFit TV comes in a classy design that is close to one-third thinner than traditional CRT TVs

LET the sleek and stylish Samsung SlimFit TV upgrade your space.

IDEAL for the aesthetically minded who are conscious of the spatial limitations of modern living, the Samsung SlimFit TV maximizes space and optimizes the harmony of your home



SlimFit TV Z57
TV Reborn

imagine TV Reborn to give you the luxury of space

Imagine from life's greatest inspirations, comes the impressive addition to the SlimFit™ series. A TV reborn from shades of brilliant flower petals, precision engineering in all its glorious intricacies, the grand sounds of a music hall and the glossy finish of a grand piano. The world's first TV made of revolutionary compact Cathode Ray Tube components slimmer than your usual CRT televisions, the SlimFit™ TV Z57 fits into any corner, and your stylish life beautifully. Affordability has not seen such luxurious design, and technology has never been so well-paired with aesthetics. We don't see it as any mere TV set, and you won't either. With SlimFit™ TV Z57, it's not that hard to imagine.

Samsung Customer Contact Center: **TOLL FREE 1-800-10SAMSUNG** for PLDT or 1-800-3SAMSUNG for Digitel.
www.samsung.com/ph

SAMSUNG

Available in 21" model

Samsung's sights, sounds, and sensibilities

VP for Consumer Electronics for Samsung Philippines Dong Ha Jang

Marketing Gen. Manager for Samsung Philippines Jerry Lacson and Product Management Group Head for Samsung Philippines Dino Obias

Gadgets Product manager for Samsung Philippines Arnold Manabat and CTV Product Manager for Samsung Philippines Roma Ramirez

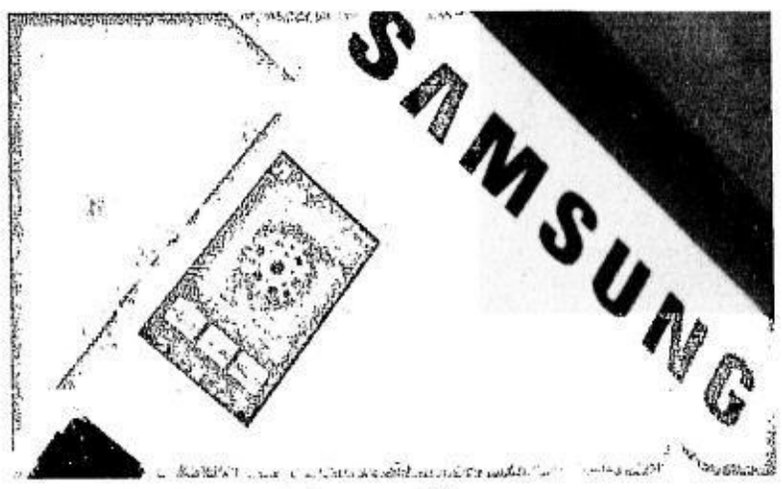
Samsung Electronics, a leading provider of consumer electronics, recently launched the F8 Full HD LCD TV and P2, S5, and T10 wireless Mp3 players in an intimate get-together at the Presidential Suite of the Manila Peninsula Hotel hosted by Samsung's Vice Presient for Consumer Electronics Dong Ha Jang, Samsung General Manager Jerry Lacson, Product Management Group Head Dino Obias, Gadgets Product Manager Arnold Manabat, and CTV Product Manager for Samsung Philippines Roma Ramirez.

Known for creating a wide range of products that satisfy consumer needs with the righ balance of stylish designs, form factors, and the latest technological features, Samsung Electronics has continously designed technology to fit consumer's lifestyles.

The launch kicked off with a briefing from the CTV Product Manager for Samsung Philippines Roma Ramirez and the Gadgets Product Manager for Samsung Philippines Arnold Manabat. They revealed what was in store for the guests that day, hyping up eveyone's excitement. An audio-visual presentation oriented the guests with the new Samsung products. The wonderfully created AVP enriched the knowledge and appreciation of the guests for the new Samsung products. The guests were then toured around the suite which was transformed into a cozy lounge and exhibit area.

In the first room, there was a demonstration of the F8 LCD TV. A model showed off the Xbox

Samsung YP-T10 features full functionality in a super slim and light player

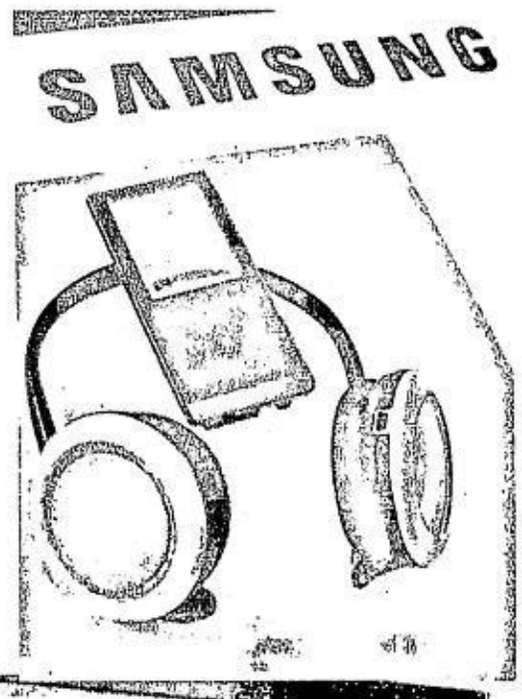


Samsung YP-P2 is equipped with the most intuitive and user-friendly touch screen

The Samsung YP-T10 wireless Mp3 player offers ultimate convenience and functionality

as CTV Product Manager for Samsung Philippines Roma Ramirez explained more of the product's features. Dubbed as the Peony, the F8 LCD TV captures the fullest image details to deliver the ultimate viewing experience. In the second room, Gadgets Product Manager for Samsung Philippines Arnold Manabat demonstrated how the S5 mp3 player can sync to a mobile phone. This allows you the convenience of answering your calls while listening to your favorite tunes. Samsung's Mp3 players combine form and function in its small and stylish package. It offers a multitude of functions aside from being your typical Mp3 player.

The launch of the Samsung F8 Full HD LCD TV and P2, S5, and T10 wireless Mp3 players was another successful endeavor as the guests were able to experience Sasmung's sights, sounds, sensibilities and more.



Samsung Philippines Dong Ha Jang, Arnold Manabat, Roma Ramirez, Jerry Lacson, and Dino Obias

A successor of the YP-K5, the Samsung YP-S5 offers the same musical freedom in a slimmer, sleeker, and more compact form.

The New Samsung F8 Full HD LCD TV or Peony is the epitome of high-quality and stylish Samsung HD TVs

Imagine wireless . . .

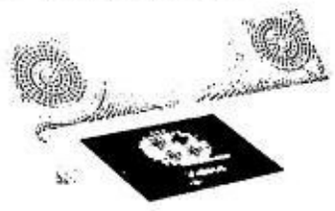
From page T4

YP-S5 : imagine Mp3freedom : Share a Soundtrack

The follow-up to last year's groundbreaking YP-K5, Samsung's new YP-S5 offers the same musical freedom in a slimmer, sleeker and more compact form. The portable 14.95 mm slim player hides attached stereo speakers whenever you want to share your music experience with others. Boasting 1.5W stereo output, these speakers can fill your room with your favorite tunes, or use the bundled cable to turn your laptop or any audio input into great big public sound. Or for a more private experience, use Samsung's EP-150 earphones for bass enhancement or Bluetooth's wireless stereo headsets for wireless enjoyment. Whether it's music for one or music for all, the S5 delivers.

Opt for the sleek and sophisticated Samsung YP-S5 available in black and white.

Bluetooth also connects to your Bluetooth-enabled mobile phone, turning your YP-S5 into a hands-free speakerphone. Never miss a call while listening to music because your player will notify you of any incoming calls, which you can accept on your Bluetooth headsets or through your YP-S5's built-in speakers. Your music, which will temporarily pause while you converse, will start up again as soon as you end your call. Have to make a call? There's no need to fish your mobile phone out of your bag. Simply make the call from your YP-S5.



SAMSUNG YP-S5 boasts 1.5W stereo output, these speakers can fill your room with your favorite tunes.

The YP-S5, available in black and white versions, is a full-featured device. The 1.8" TFT display showcases your favorite photos, videos, e-books and flash games. Record memos on the voice recorder, listen to FM radio or download your favorite songs in mp3, WMA and AAC audio formats. With 2G, 4G and 8GB, you can have it all with the YP-S5. Firmware upgrades are available at www.samsungplay.com.

The YP-S5's built-in alarm greets you in the morning with your favorite song choices or FM radio. The alarm works no matter what you're doing - whether you're listening to music, using the radio, or watching video even if your YP-S5 is turned off.

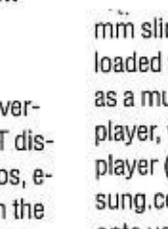
With 24 hours of playtime with earphones and 5 hours with the slide-out speakers, there is a lot of time to share your favorite music with your loved ones.

YP-T10 : imagine Your Digital Friend

The perfect blend of technology and style, the YP-T10 features full functionality in a super slim and light player. A slice of music entertainment at only 7.9 mm slim and 43 grams, the YP-T10 comes fully loaded with the latest multimedia functions such as a music player, FM radio, photo album, video player, voice recorder, text reader and game player (firmware upgrade available at www.samsung.com) in one. Store all your files directly onto your YP-T10; with 2GB, 4GB and 8GB versions available in 5 yummy colours. It also allows you 30 hours of earphone playback and 4 hours of speaker playback before your next battery recharge.

A slice of music entertainment at only 7.9 mm slim and 43 grams, the Samsung YP-T10 comes fully loaded with the latest multimedia functions in 5 yummy colours.

The superior quality 2" screen plays your video in crystal clear QVGA resolution while DNSe 2.0 pumps out powerful sound that you can enjoy solo or with a friend. A feast for the eyes and the ears, the YP-T10 is a mini-theatre for your palm. For screenings with a friend, Bluetooth 1:2 support enables you to connect 2 wireless stereo headsets for double the pleasure.

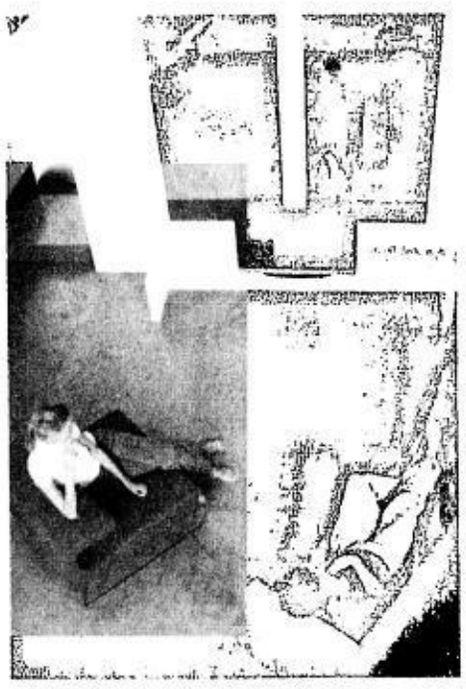


Using animated line drawings, the amusing GUI is one of the unique features of the Samsung YP-T10.

A fun character animation GUI gives a new look to the menu navigation of your mp3 player. Using animated line drawings, the amusing GUI is one of the unique looks you can choose for your multimedia player.

The Ultimate . . .

From page T1



The slender depth of the Samsung SlimFit TV enables it to fit wherever you want to put it whether it's on the desk, table, or shelf.

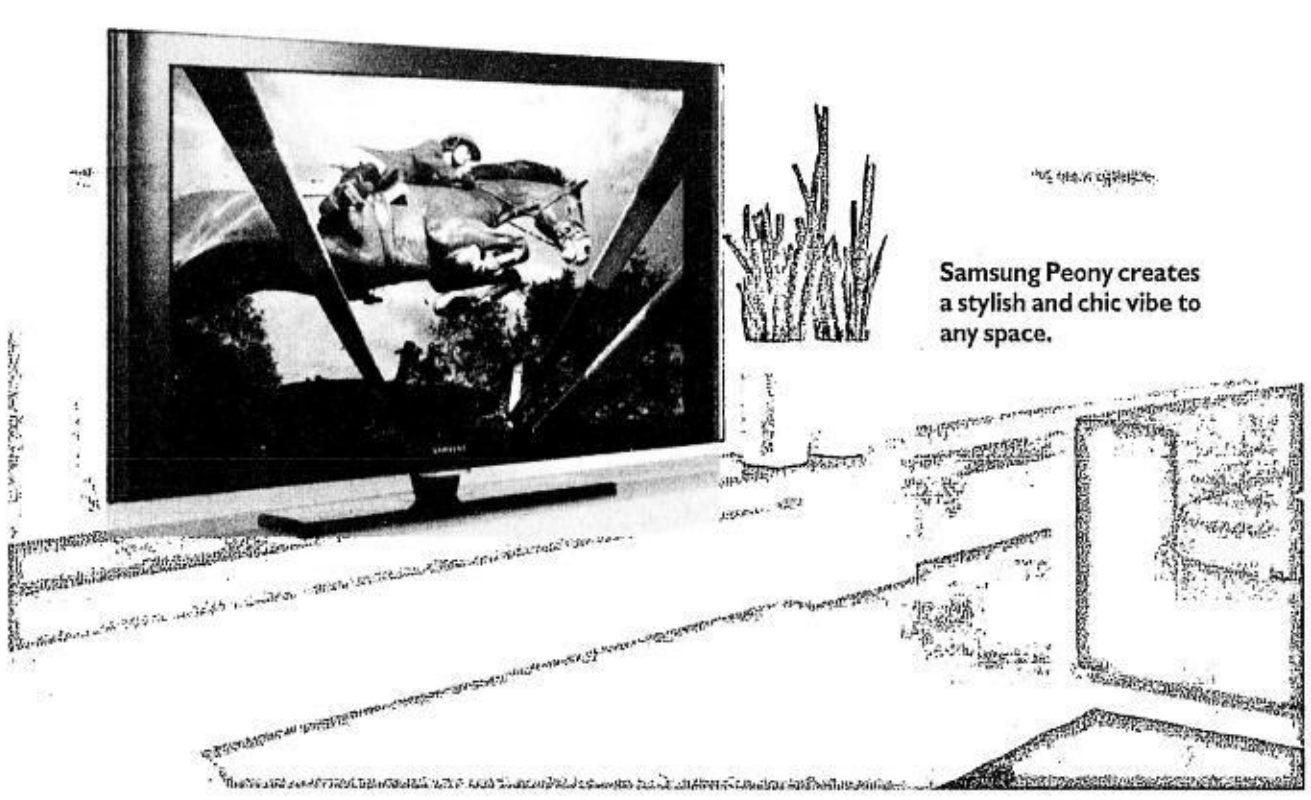
niously into your living style. Its slender depth enables it to fit wherever you want to put it. Whether it's on the desk, table, or shelf, it can enable you to transform your life. Ideal for the aesthetically minded who are conscious of the spatial limitations of modern living, it maximises space and optimizes the harmony of your home.

Dong Ha Jang, Samsung Philippines' Vice-President for Consumer Electronics notes, "Samsung is passionate about leveraging our innovations in technology and design to enhance consumers' lifestyles. We will deliver to consumers TVs with rich colours, sharp pictures, advanced features and superior, timeless design." Surely, you can't go wrong with the Samsung SlimFit TV.

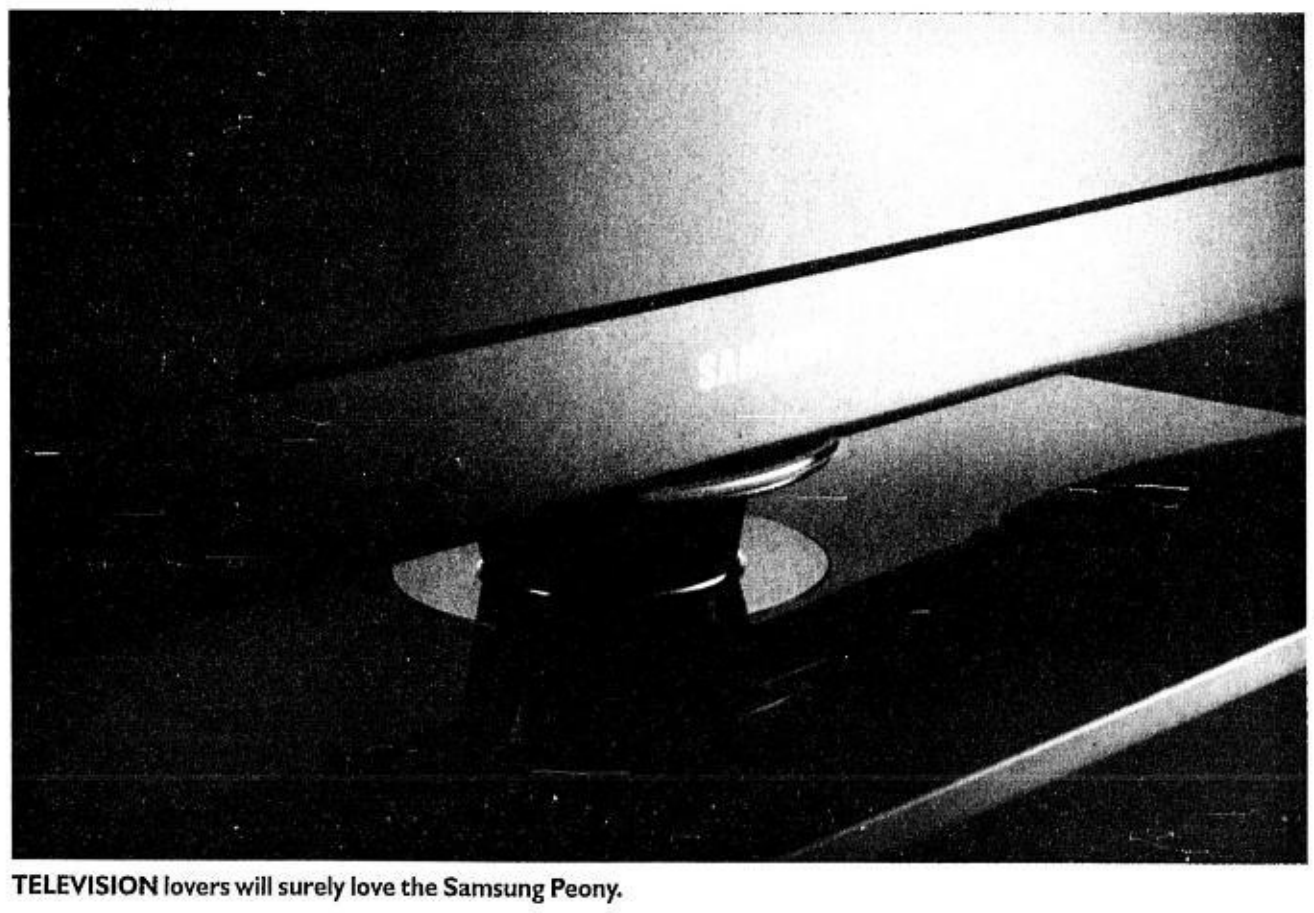
The Samsung SlimFit TV is the vanguard of electronic art.

SAMSUNG PEONY comes in an elegantly styled glossy black units that boast soft, understated lines touched off with Samsung's signature crystal clear glass trim, icy-blue lighting and unique side switches.

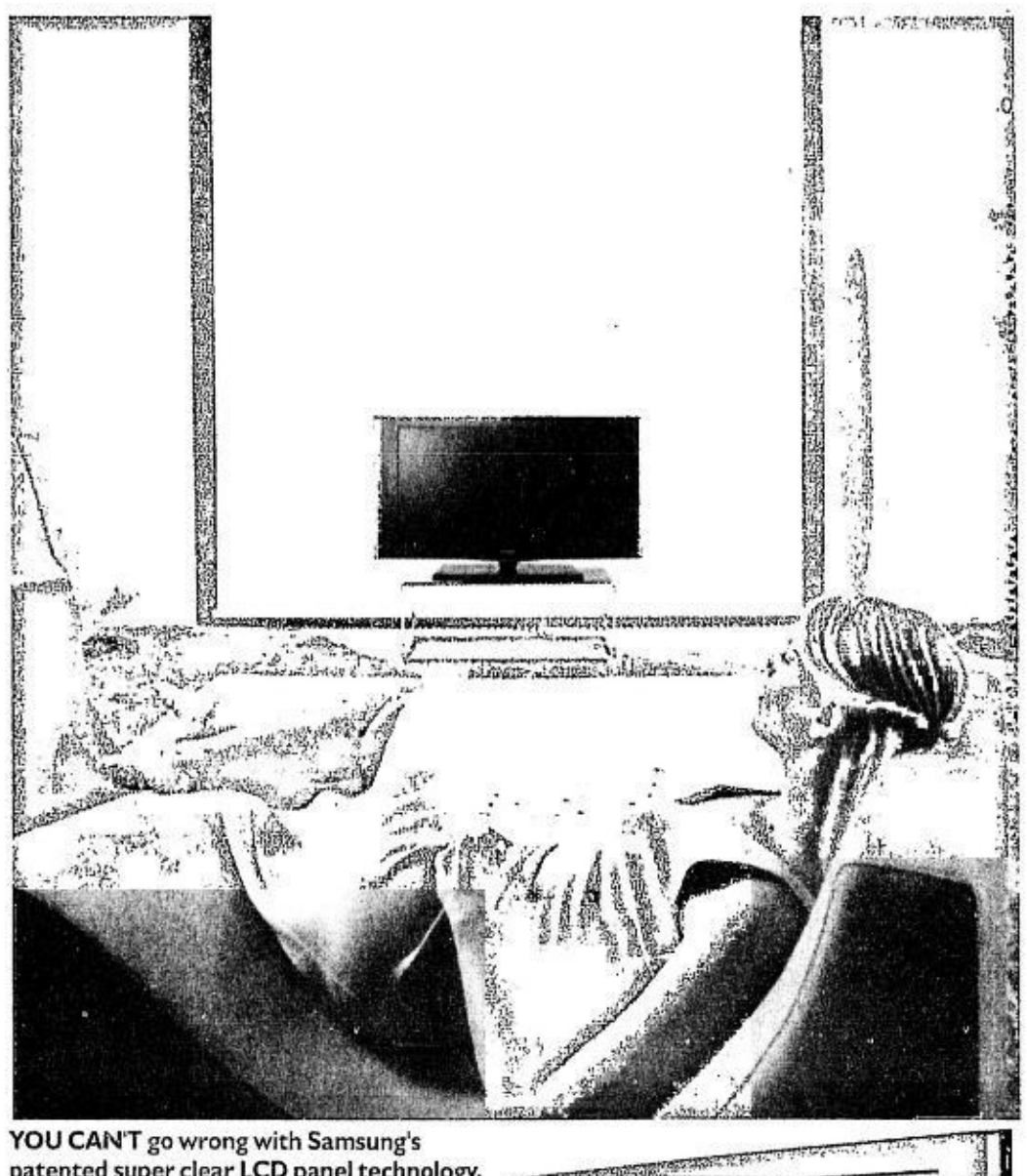
Taking Visual Entertainment to Another Level



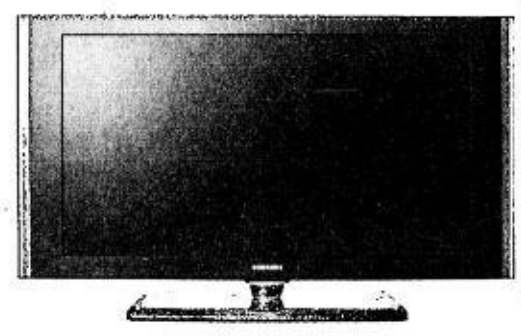
Samsung Peony creates a stylish and chic vibe to any space.



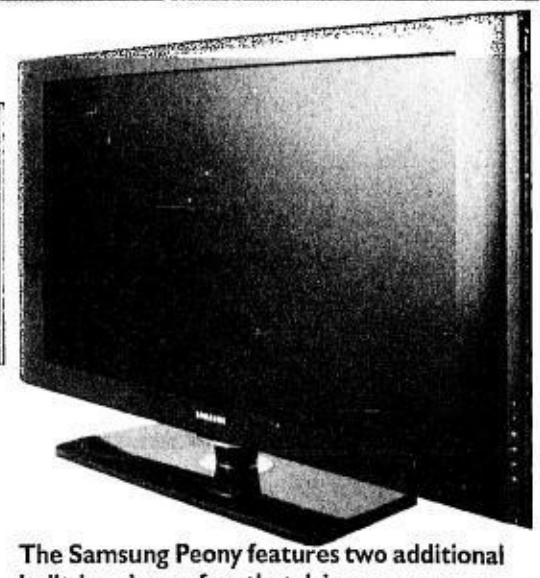
TELEVISION lovers will surely love the Samsung Peony.



YOU CAN'T go wrong with Samsung's patented super clear LCD panel technology.



The Samsung Peony comes with three conveniently located HDMI inputs that allow users to connect their latest HD components, such as Blu-ray players, game consoles and HD camcorders.



The Samsung Peony features two additional built-in sub-woofers that drive more power into the stereo.

MANY Filipinos are certified TV buffs who tend to glue themselves in front of their trusty television when they get home from work or on weekends - watching one show after another, or treating themselves to a movie marathon of their favorite flicks.

Samsung, the leader in the LCD TV market, gives TV aficionados new visual eye candy as it recently launched the Samsung F8 LCD TV. Incorporating a dazzling array of new technologies and features, the F8 captures the fullest details from action-packed movie blockbusters and fast-paced sporting events to deliver the ultimate viewing experience.

"The F8 is the very epitome of Samsung's technological leadership in HD TVs, and we hope its launch will help introduce consumers to the wonders of Full HD. Samsung will continue to dedicate ourselves to enhancing consumers' lifestyles with our leading edge technology, content and design innovation," says Mr. Dong Ha Jang, Samsung Philippines' Vice-President for Consumer Electronics.

The model (40"/46"/52") features 100Hz MotionPLUS technology, which eliminates blurring in fast-paced on-screen movements. Advanced algorithms in Samsung's new 100Hz MotionPLUS processor creates a middle frame between image movements by intelligently anticipating the action, offering more natural and smoother images. With Samsung's patented super clear LCD panel technology and Full HD 1080p, the F8 delivers blacker blacks and a high dynamic contrast ratio of 25,000:1, at resolutions nearly two times sharper than conventional HD TVs.

The sophisticated and classy F8 comes in an elegantly styled glossy black units that boast soft, understated lines touched off with Samsung's signature crystal clear glass trim, icy-blue lighting and unique side switches.

Equipped with Wide Color Enhancer, the F8 can create a wider range of colors to make traditionally weak colors like green and blue look deeper and clearer. For movie buffs and gamers, the F8 features two additional built-in sub-woofers that drive more power into the lower frequencies of the 2.2 channel stereo, while Samsung's Game Mode deepens the units' rich bass, sharpens images and provides richer colors.

The F8 comes with three conveniently located HDMI inputs that allow users to connect their latest HD components, such as Blu-ray players, game consoles and HD camcorders. Its new WiselinkTM USB 2.0 feature also enables handy connections with digital cameras and MP3 players.

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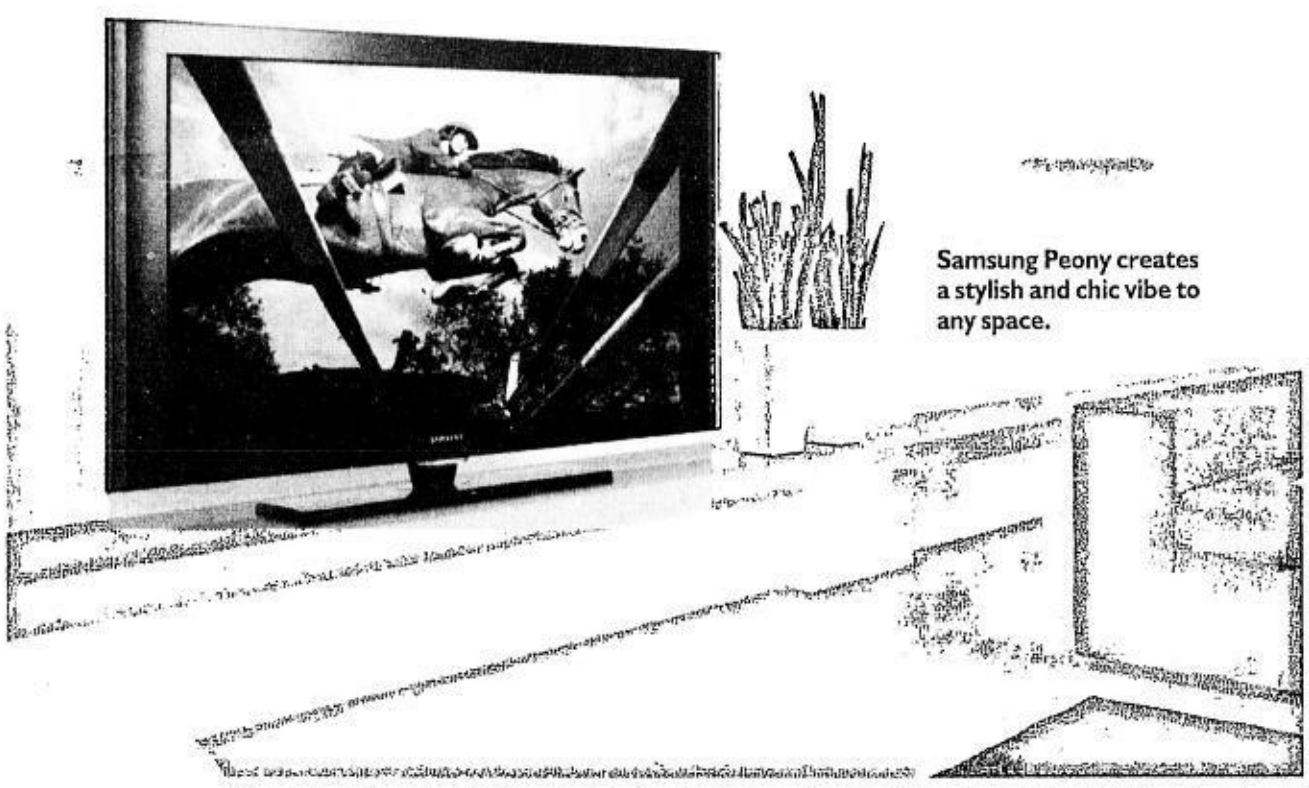
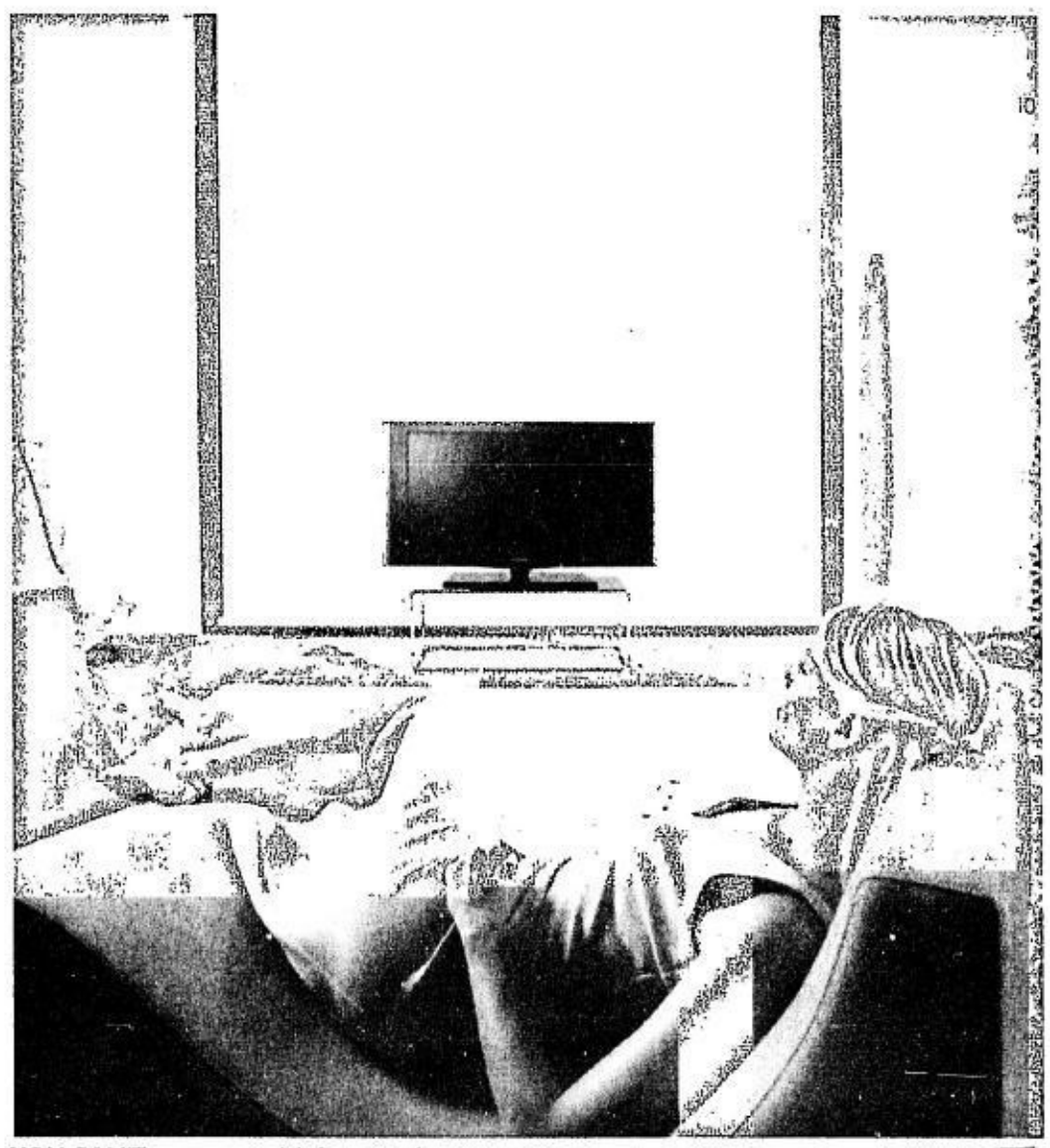
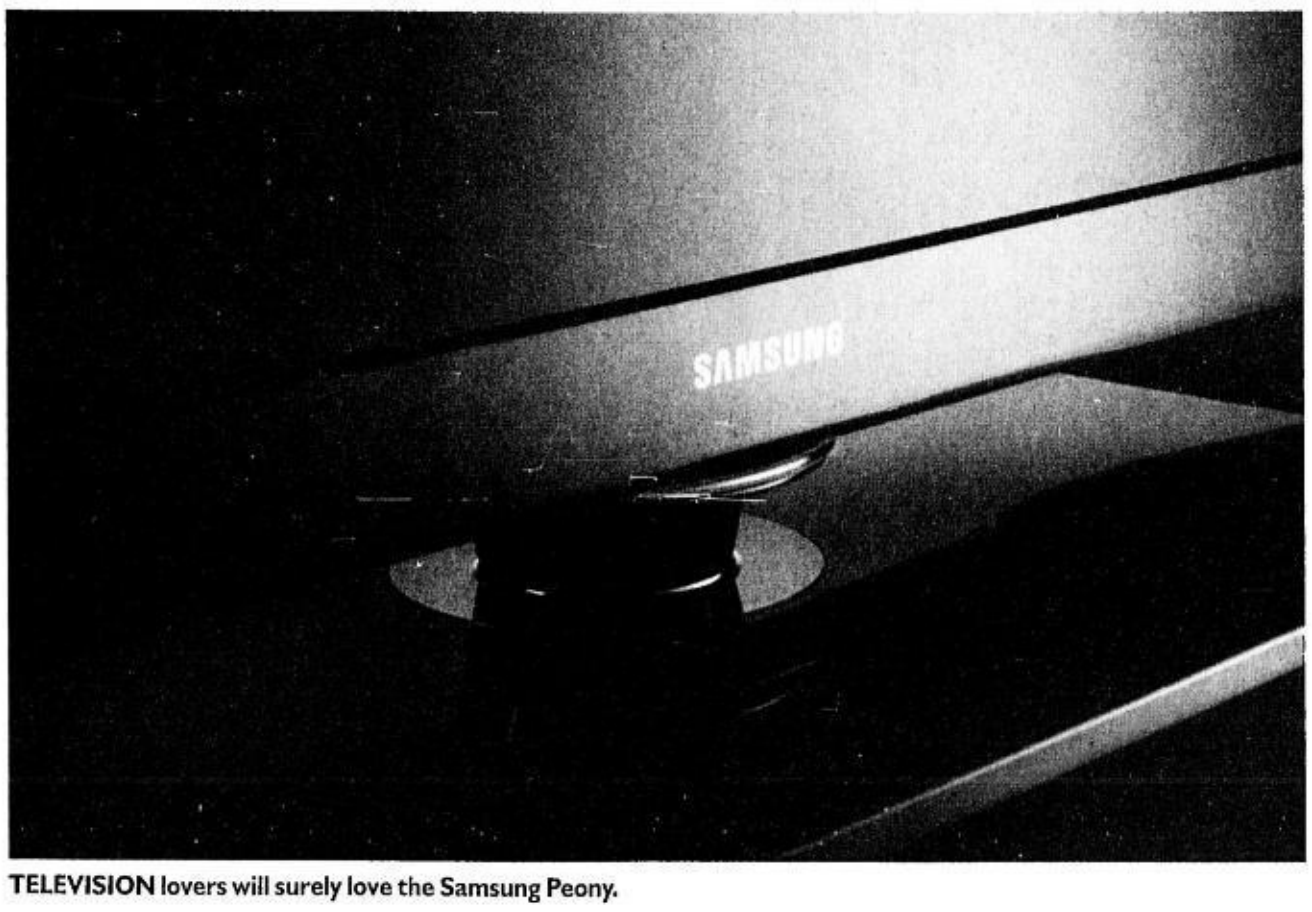
Taking Visual Entertainment to Another Level



Samsung Peony creates a stylish and chic vibe to any space.





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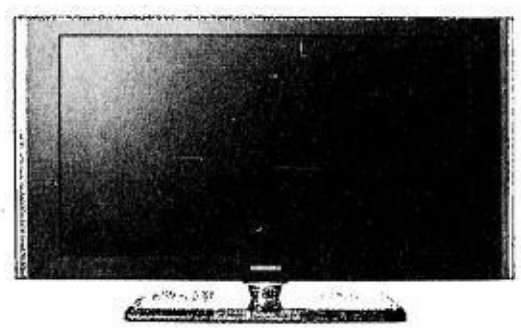

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Imagine wireless sound freedom

Experience the freedom allowed by the Samsung wireless Mp3 players.

With Bluetooth 1:2 support, listen to your tunes with no strings attached.

SAMSUNG Electronics strikes the perfect note again as it recently launched their state of the art, cutting edge, and features-packed mp3 players. "Samsung's MP3 players offer consumers a superior experience, thanks to unsurpassed levels of sound quality as well as enhanced design and user-based features," says Mr. Spencer Shim, Samsung Philippines' President & CEO.

Music for all tastes, the new Samsung multimedia devices, the Samsung YP-P2, YP-S5, and YP-T10, make up a trio of the most stylish devices that excel in design, video, sound and connectivity options. Featuring high performance video, Samsung's new mp3 players boast larger screens with improved resolution.

Sound purists will appreciate the high quality acoustics created by Samsung's proprietary sound technology, Digital Natural Sound engine (DNSe 2.0), included inside Samsung's mp3 players. With the aim of restoring the best sonic experience to the end user, DNSe 2.0 is a consistent recipient of high accolades by sound professionals. It reproduces the "genuine" stereo and deep bass sounds intended by the music content creators, that can be easily experienced when using bass-enhanced EP-150 earphones or through YP-S5's built-in hide-away speakers, which despite the miniature size pump out powerful music that can be enjoyed by everyone around you.

For your convenience, dedicated tactile hot keys for volume and play are placed on the side, maintaining the immaculate and sleek surface for the screen.

All this improved technology has been fitted into slimmer and sleeker forms that add a visual and tactile pleasure to the audio experience. Millimeters have been shaved off to create players that offer a better grip in the hand, while easily slipping into pockets and purses. In addition to the outer appearance, the internal navigation of the mp3 players has vastly improved. Groovy icons and graphic images guide the user through the mobile's functions; or for a customized look, users can choose their favorite photos or images as a background of the mobile's menu. And for a little frivolity in the UI, the YP-10 offers a cartoon stop-motion animation with an endearing puppy, adding humor and fun to your navigation.

All enhanced with Bluetooth technology, all three mp3 players offer great connectivity options to stereo headsets (with remote control functions) and portable speakers. Bluetooth simplifies file transfers, and even connects to your mobile phone*. With Bluetooth's hands-free profile, you'll never miss a call while you're listening to your music. You can also use your Bluetooth headset or speakers to carry on your conversations without ever touching your mobile phone.

Samsung YP-P2 showcases an expansive 3" widescreen and 35 hours of music playback and 5 hours of movie play.

YP-P2 : imagine the power of touch

Only 9.9 mm slim, the YP-P2 showcases an expansive 3" widescreen for your viewing pleasure. Easy on the eyes, the high resolution screen displays 30 frames per second in DVD movie format 16:9 screen ratio for seamless steady video playback.

The large screen also features Samsung's most intuitive, innovative and user-friendly touch screen. The transparent emotional GUI allows you to select the background image for the navigation menus. The touch screen reacts to your gestures using EmoTure that goes beyond just merely tapping your selections. Icons will dance across the screen as you glide your finger up, down and across the screen, so that the mobile scrolls through the menu icons like a rolodex. For your convenience, dedicated tactile hot keys for volume and play are placed on the side, maintaining the immaculate and sleek surface for the screen.

DNSe 2.0 turns the YP-P2 into a concert hall and personal theatre, offering the best music experience that you can enjoy on Bluetooth's wireless speakers. With Bluetooth 1:2 support, you can watch a movie or listen to music with a friend using Bluetooth headsets, no strings attached. With 35 hours of music playback and 5 hours of movie playback, you have all the time in the world before your next battery recharge.

Available with 2, 4, and 8GB NAND flash memory, the multi-functional YP-P2 is compatible with a variety of file types for music, photo, video, and text media. In addition, the YP-P2 is equipped with a built-in FM receiver.

imagine freedom from wires

Imagine how Bluetooth wireless technology can take you beyond the confines of wires to a limitless new world of music possibilities. Let the music flow with a Samsung Bluetooth headset (YA-BH 270) or Bluetooth speaker (YA-BS 300) and our three new wireless MP3 players. Immerse yourself in the lush 3" widescreen of the P2, groove with your friends using the side-out speaker of the S5 or kick back with the T10 and its fun graphic interface. The freedom to revel in your music with no strings attached. With the new Samsung Bluetooth MP3 players, it's not that hard to imagine. To learn more, visit *www.samsung.com/bluetoothMP3*.

P2 S5 T10

Samsung Customer Contact Center: TOLL FREE 1-800-10SAMSUNG for PLDT or 1-800-3SAMSUNG for Digitel.

SAMSUNG

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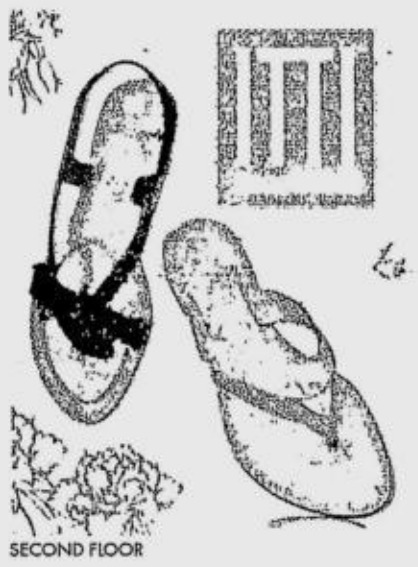
GROUND FLOOR

GROUND FLOOR

Alixandré

SECOND FLOOR



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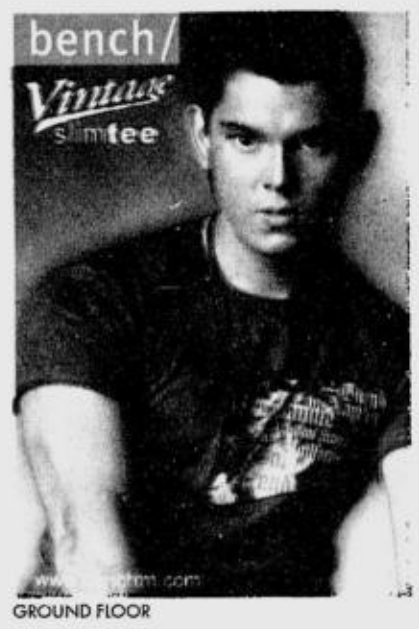
RUSTY LOPEZ

GROUND FLOOR

SECOND FLOOR

GROUND FLOOR



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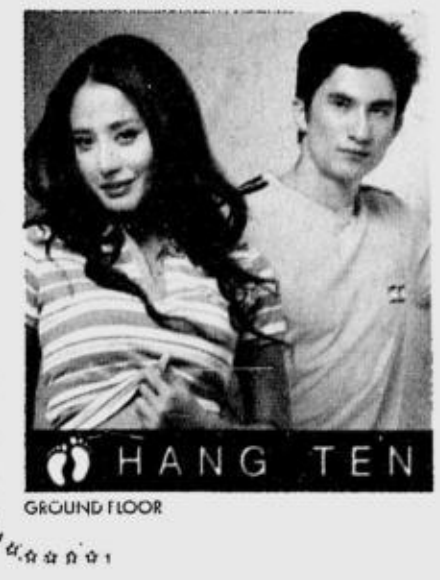

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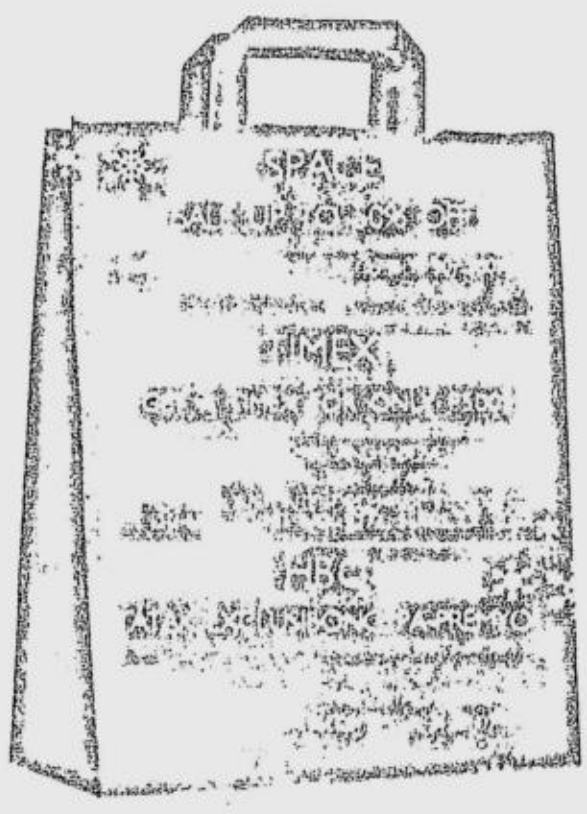

SM SUPERMALLS

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ACROSS TECHNOLOGY

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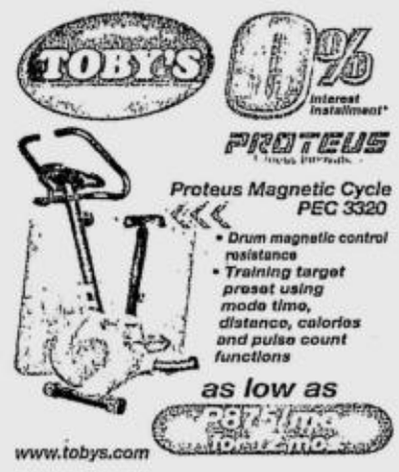

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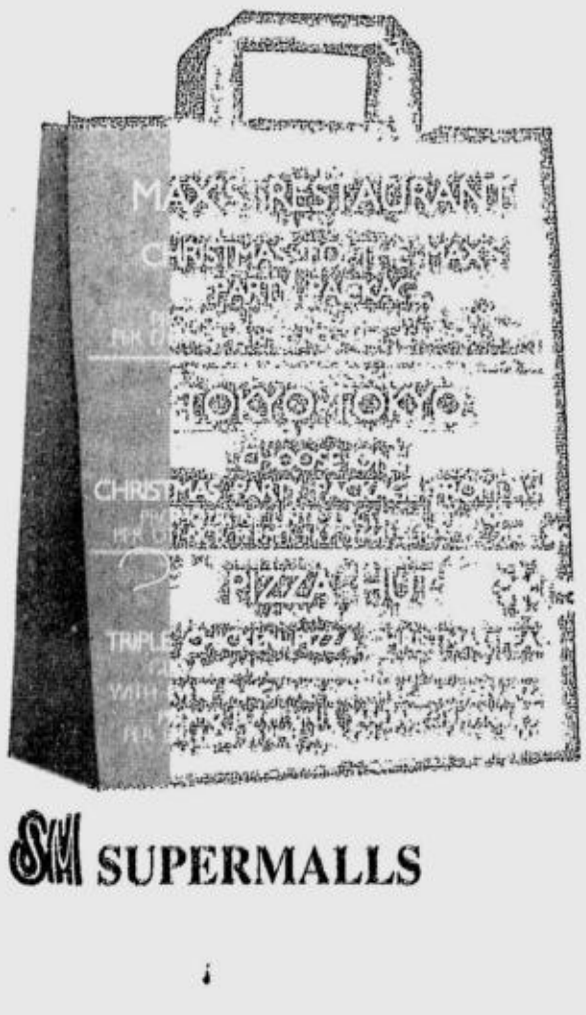

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SM SUPERMALLS

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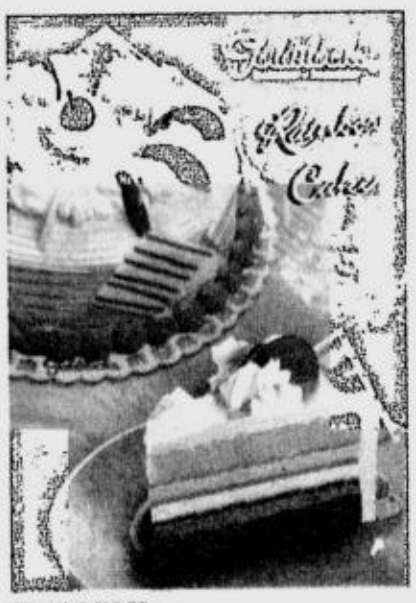

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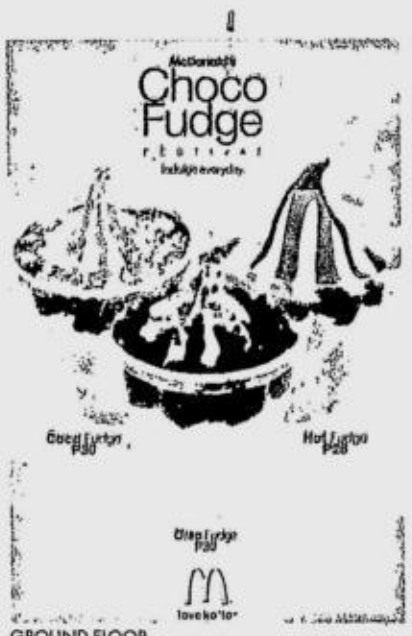

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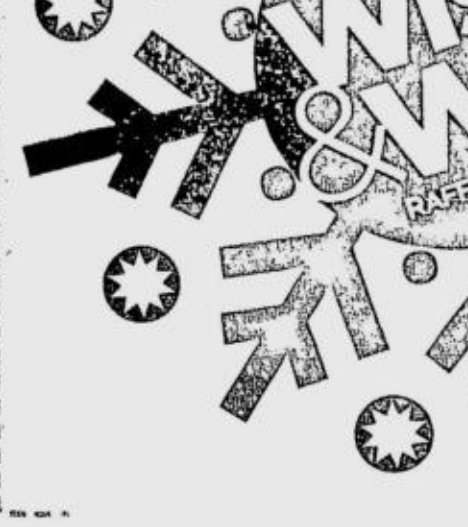

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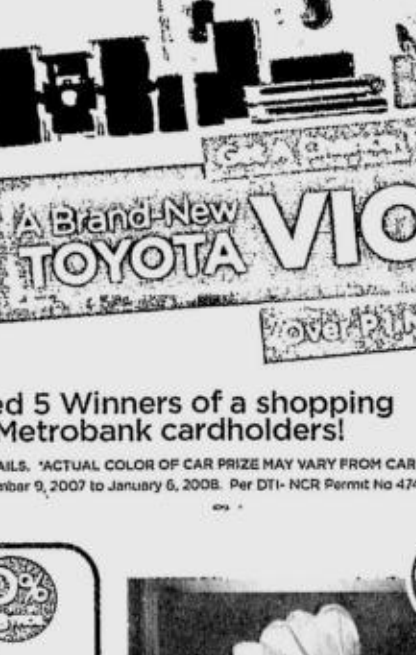

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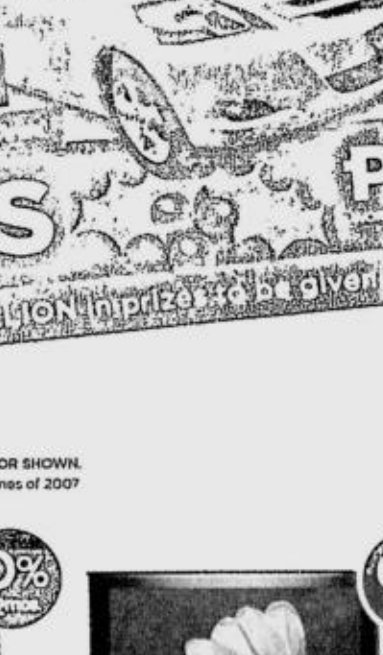
32" LCD TV
HD Ready up to 1080P
FREE 21" Flat 21LZE28 or Kenon Speaker KF18 + AV Link DVD or Shure earphone E2C
P59,990



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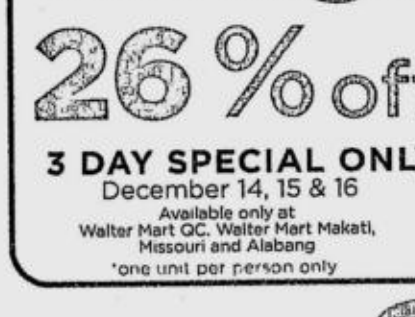

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8,000:1 Contrast Ratio
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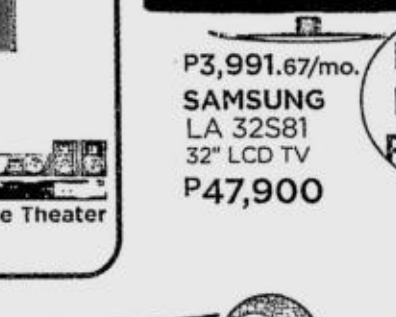

P9,166.58/mo.
LG
42LC4R
42" LCD TV
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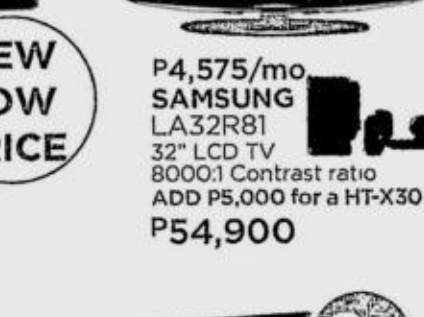

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SONY
KLV 40S310A
40" LCD TV
8,000:1 Contrast Ratio
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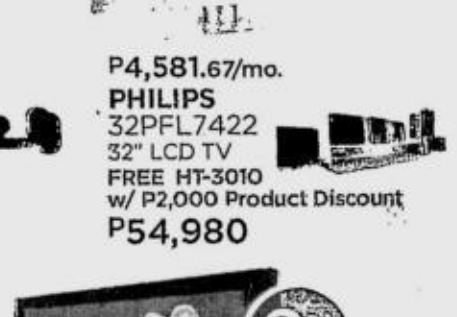

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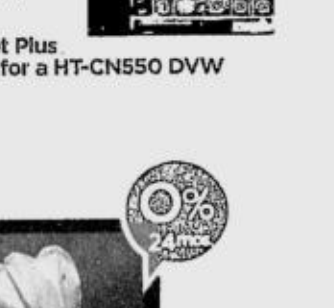

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SANYO
ST-21CE1/V
21" Conventional TV
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TCL
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21" Flat TV
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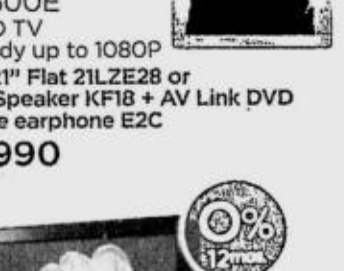

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21" Flat TV
181 Channel, Compatible Tuner
ADD P999 for a DVD Player
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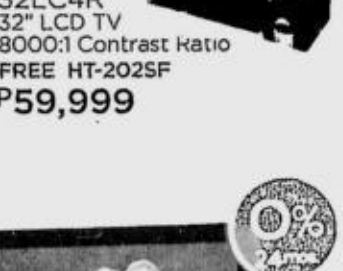

P733.17/mo.
LG RP21FC1RB
21" Flat Slim TV
with FREE TV Rack
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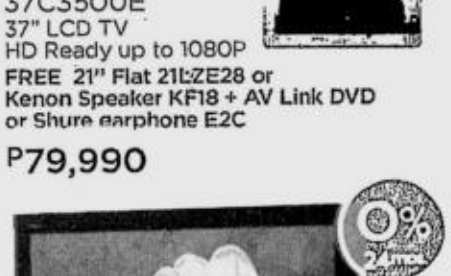

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21" Flat TV
Full AV Stereo, DVD Output
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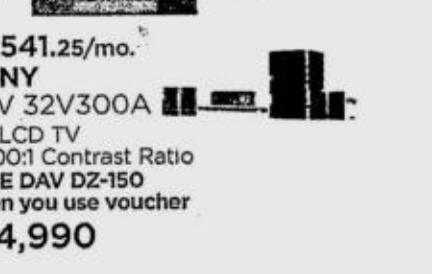

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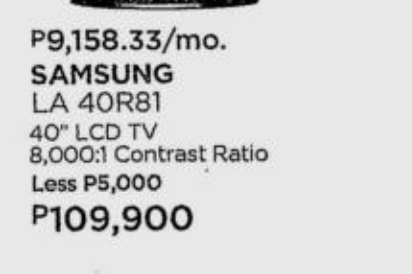

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PANASONIC
TC-29GX20
29" Flat TV
AV Stereo sysem
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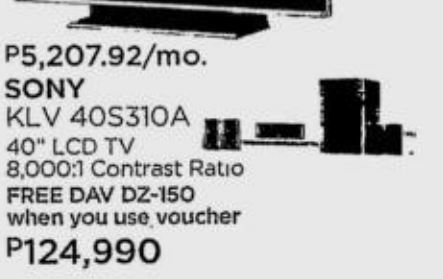

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MTS Stereo
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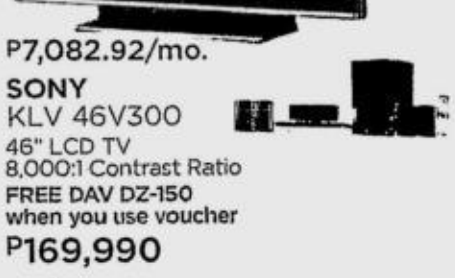

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29" Super Slim Flat TV
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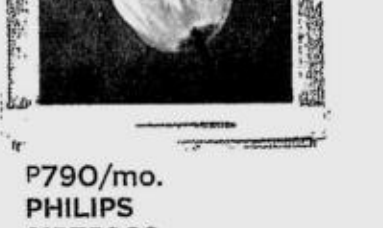

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Gift Certificate is valid for dine in and take out in any Red Ribbon Luzon outlet.
Split transaction for single item purchase is not allowed Red Ribbon is valid for one (1) regular sized round cake. Choose from specific flavors.

Promo Period: November 9, 2007 to December 31, 2007. Per DTI-NCR Permit No.4742 Series of 2007

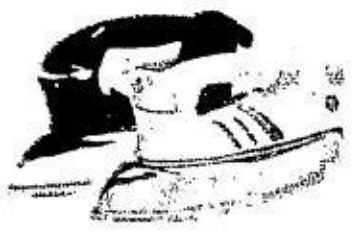
It's more beautiful with Red Ribbon

Visuals, specifications, prices, & promotions may change without prior notice. 0% applicable provided monthly bill is paid in full. Subject to bank terms and conditions. Prices applicable until December 31, 2007.

Hassle-free Holiday Shopping only at Abenson

ABENSON

Gifts Below ₱1,000



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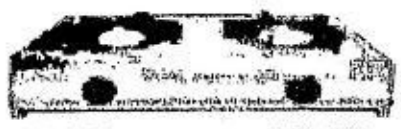
HI-83/HI-84
FLAT IRON
₱298 each

HANABISHI
HWK-112C
Electric Kettle
1.8 Liters
₱298

DOWELL
SSB-33
Gas Stove
1 Burner Gas Stove
₱328

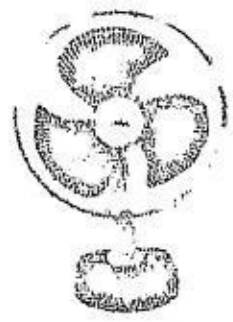
ASAHI **₱498**
OT-611
Oven Toaster

HANABISHI
HCM-108
Coffee Maker
6 Cups
₱498

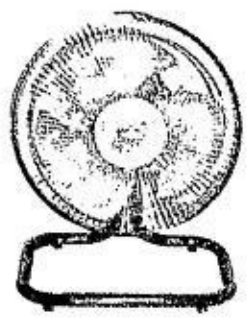


ASAHI **₱548**
GS-667
2 Burner Gas Stove

HANABISHI
ARC-180
Rice Cooker
10 Cups
₱598



UNION
DF-1615R
16" Deskfan
₱618

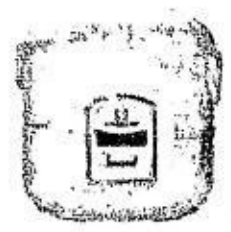


NIKON
IFF12BB
12" Floor fan
₱698

UNION
UGM-DF1215R
E12" Deskfan
₱558

UNION
UGDF-1630
16" Stand fan
₱748

HANABISHI
AEA-390
Electric Airpot
₱898



STANDARD
SJC-10S
Rice Cooker
10 Cups
₱998

3D
RC70S
Rice Cooker
10 Cups
₱998

Visuals, specifications, prices, & promotions may change without prior notice. 0% applicable provided monthly bill is paid in full. Subject to bank terms and conditions. Prices applicable until December 31, 2007.

Holiday Surprises!

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KYOWA E- KETTLE
SKU NO. 64674

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Promo period is from November 9 to December 31, 2007. Per DTI- NCR Permit No. 4760 series of 200

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ASAHI GS446 STOVE
SKU NO. 64677

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*Valid on cash transactions only for LG.
VALID ON CASH & CARD TRANSACTIONS FOR SANYO, CONDURA, WHIRLPOOL AND ELECTROLUX.
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Holiday Surprises!

ABENSON

FREE ELECTRIC FAN
NIKON NDF16-67 SKU NO. 19767

PLEASE CUT AND PRESENT THIS COUPON UPON PURCHASE TO AVAIL OF PROMO.
*Valid on cash transactions only for LG.
VALID ON CASH & CARD TRANSACTIONS FOR CARRIER AND CONDURA.
Promo period is from November 9 to December 31, 2007 Per DTI- NCR Permit No. 4760 series of 2007

Strictly one (1) coupon per transaction. Cannot be used in conjunction with other promotions. Coupon is non-convertible to cash and non-changeable to other products

Holiday Surprises!

ABENSON

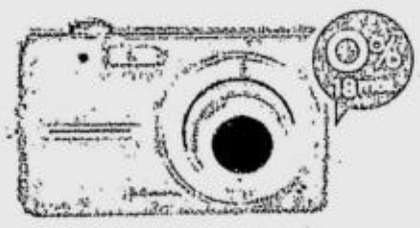
FREE 7" MINI FAN
HANASISHI HTF701 FAN
SKU NO. 61020

PLEASE CUT AND PRESENT THIS COUPON UPON PURCHASE TO AVAIL OF PROMO.
*Valid on cash transactions only for LG.
VALID ON CASH & CARD TRANSACTIONS FOR SHARP, SANYO, TCL, JVC AND PHILIPS.
Promo period is from November 9 to December 31, 2007 Per DTI- NCR Permit No. 4760 series of

Strictly one (1) coupon per transaction. Cannot be used in conjunction with other promotions. Coupon is non-convertible to cash and non-changeable to other products

Capture This Season's Precious Moments

GADGETS

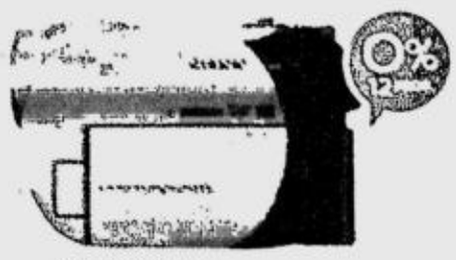


P1,055.28/mo.
OLYMPUS FE280
8.0 Megapixels, 3x Optical zoom
2.5" LCD Screen
P18,995

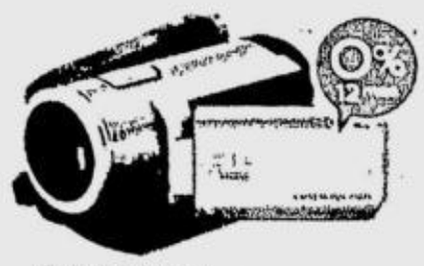
P2,245.83/mo.
CANON IXUS 950IS
8.0 Megapixels, 4x Optical zoom
with Optical image stabilizer
P26,950

P2,916.58/mo.
SONY DSC T200
8.1 Megapixels, 5x Optical zoom
2.5" Touchscreen LCD
P34,999

P2,291.67/mo.
CANON DC210
2.7" LCD Screen
35x Optical zoom
P27,500



P2,333.25/mo.
SONY DVD608
2.5" LCD Screen
40x Optical zoom
P27,999



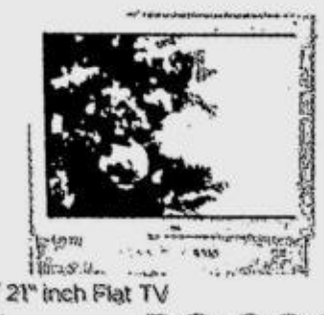
P4,999.92/mo.
SONY HDR HC5
2.7" Wide Clear LCD
10x Optical zoom
P59,999

Visuals, specifications, prices, & promotions may change without prior notice. 0% applicable provided monthly bill is paid in full. Subject to bank terms and conditions.

ABENSON

Top 10 Christmas Giveaways

1

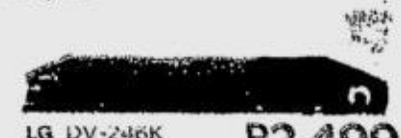


LG 21FB3RB / 21" inch Flat TV
with TV Rack **P6,999**

2

PHILIPS HTS3000 **P7,990**
5.1 Speaker System

3



LG DV-246K **P2,499**
Super Slim Design
Component / S-Video

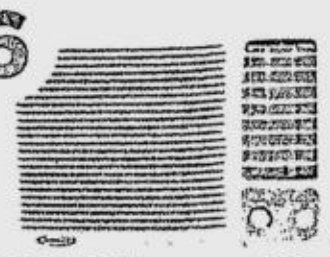
4

SILVER FIESTA
MAGIC SING
P8,950

5

SHARP
Washing Machine
ES470W /
4.7kg Single Tub
P3,198

6

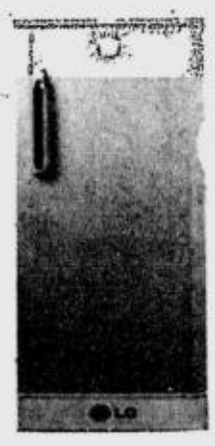


CONDURA Aircon **P8,998**
WCOND006EA 0.5 HP

7

SONY Cybershot
DSC S700 /
7.2 Mega Pixels
P10,990

8



LG Refrigerator
GNU171 CLS /
6 cu ft
P9,998

9

PHILIPS
7FF2FPA
P9,990

10

DOWELL Air Cooler **P3,498**
ARC-90

SHARP

NEW MODEL!

LC-52A83M

AQUOS

NOTHING IS LOST.

SHARP AQUOS LCD TV

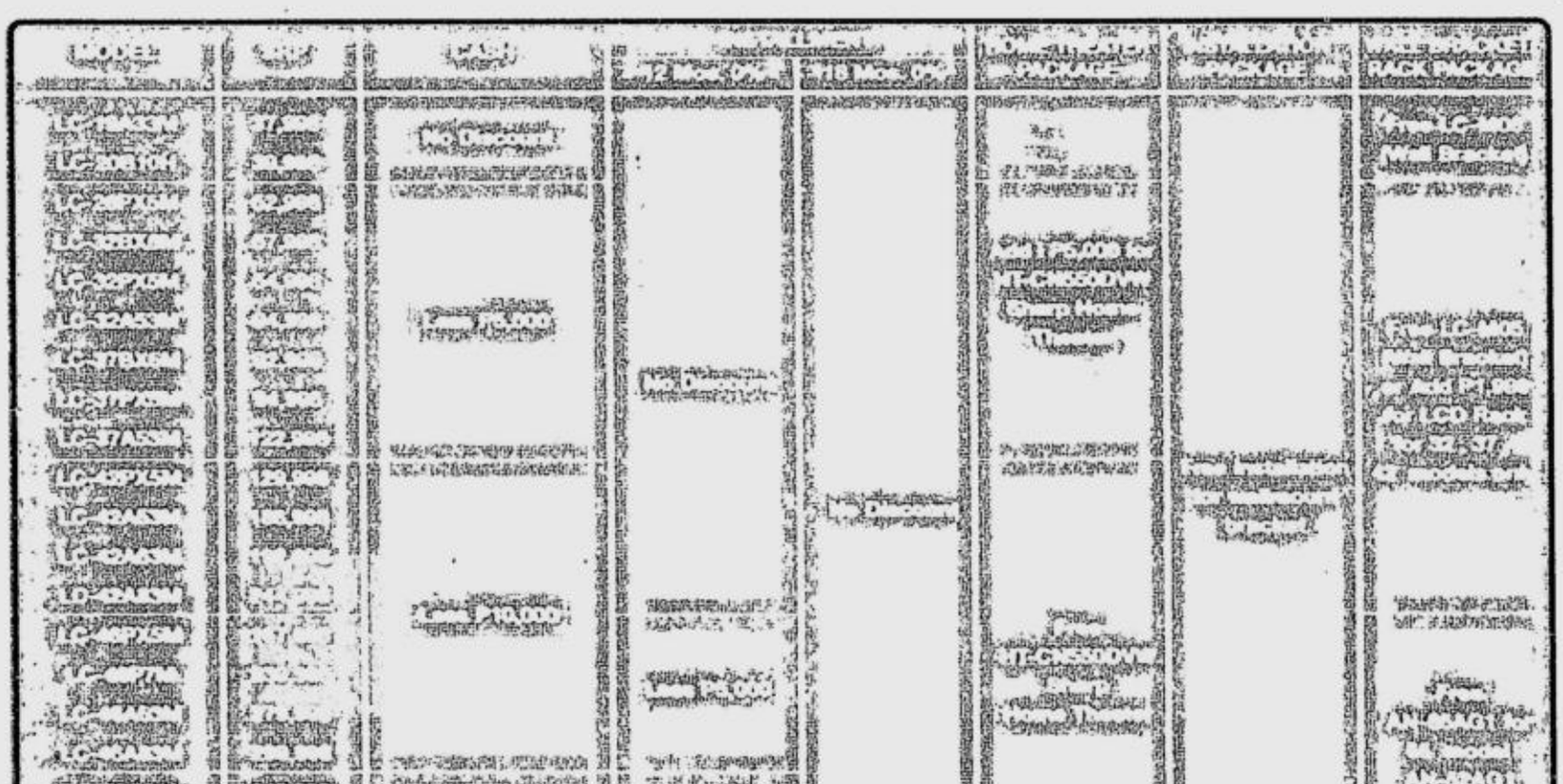
120HZ Fine Motion Advanced

FULL HD PANEL | RGB Plus | SLIM LINE DESIGN | Audyssey EQ

LCD PANEL MADE IN JAPAN

PROMO up to Dec. 31 only!

GET GREAT DISCOUNTS AND FREEBIES WHEN YOU BUY AN AQUOS TODAY!

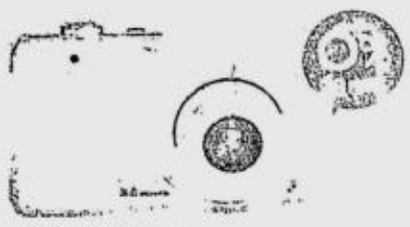


Promo period: October 26 - December 31, 2007. See flyers for details.

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 5442. Series of 2007.

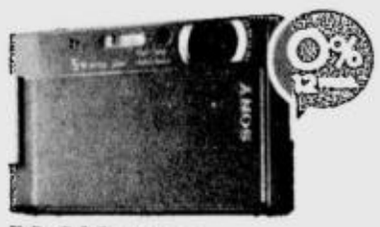
GADGETS

Capture This Season's Precious Moments

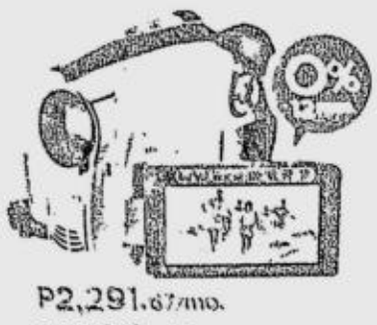


P1,055.28/mo.
OLYMPUS FE280
8C Megap... 3X...
2.5" LCD S...ee
P18,995

P2,245.83/mo.
CANON IXUS 950I
...
or
P26,950

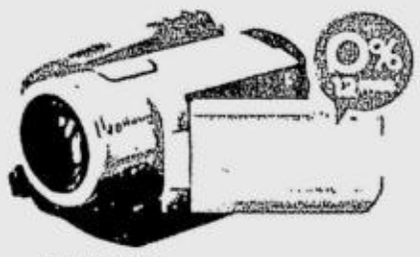


P2,916.58/mo.
SONY DSC-T200
...Mega... ...Opti... ...zoom
...5 To... ...reer
P34,999



P2,291.67/mo.
CANON
...
P27,500

P2,333.25/mo.
SONY
P27,999



P4,999.92/mo.
SONY
...
P59,999

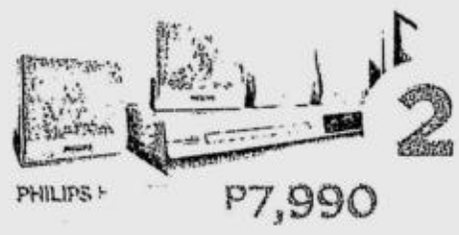
...ual specificatio... price... & promoti... ...ange without prior notice ...appeaoin pr...ted monthly bill...paid in full. Subject to bank terms and conditions

ABENSON

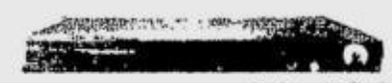
Top 10 Christmas Giveaways

1

LG...
with TV Rack
P6,999



2
PHILIPS ...
P7,990



3
P2,499

4
SILVER FIESTA
MAGIC SING
P8,950

SHARP

LC-52A83M

AQUOS

NOTHING IS LOST.
SHARP AQUOS LCD TV

120HZ Fine Motion Advanced

FULL HD PANEL | RGB Plus | SLIM LINE DESIGN | Advanced EQ

LCD PANEL MADE IN JAPAN

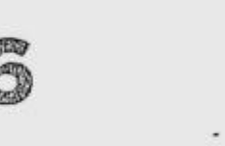
GET GREAT DISCOUNTS AND FREEBIES
WHEN YOU BUY AN AQUOS TODAY!

Per DTI NCR Permit No. 5442 Series of 200...

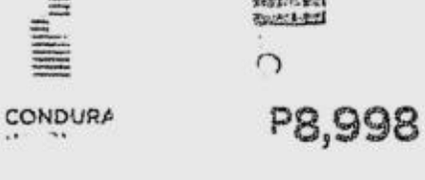
5
SHARP
P3,198

6
CONDURA
P8,998

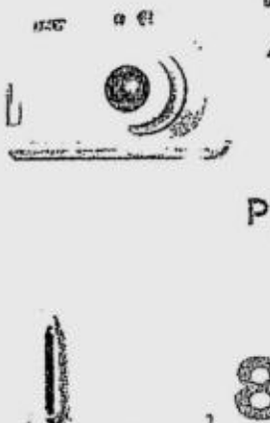
7
P10,990



8
...G
P9,998



9
PHILIPS
P9,990



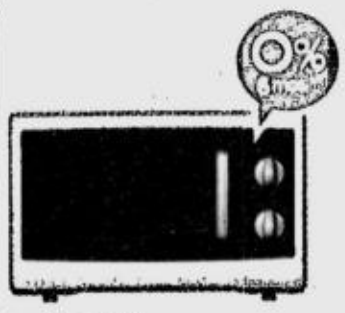
10
DOWELL
A...
P3,498

Holiday Deals!

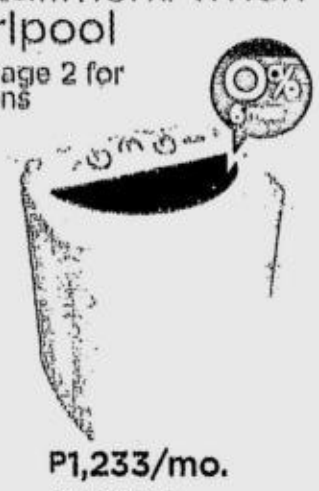
Free Electric Kettle* and 0% interest installment when you buy a Whirlpool

*use your coupon. see page 2 for your terms and conditions

Whirlpool

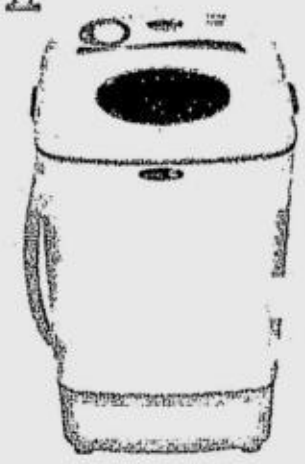


P583/mo.
X220MS
20 Liters Mechanical Control
P3,498

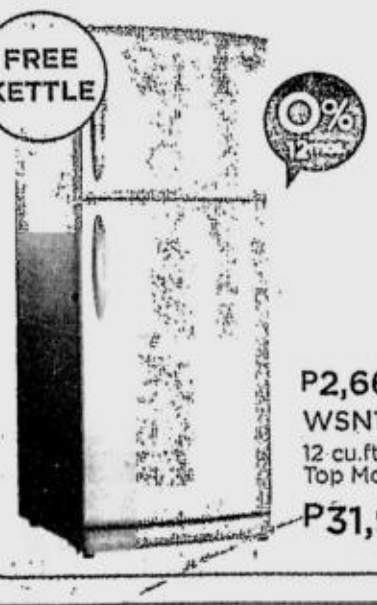


P1,233/mo.
XWT608
6 kg
Semi-automatic w/ Mini-pulsator
P7,398

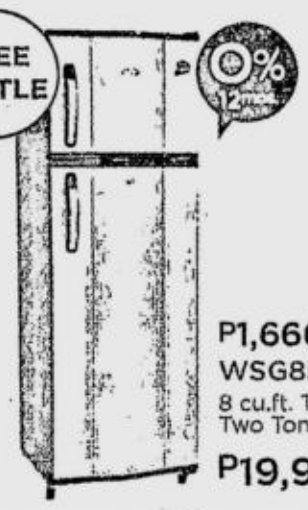
P5,333/mo.
4PGSC9455
10.5 kg
27" Super Capacity
Fully Auto
P31,998



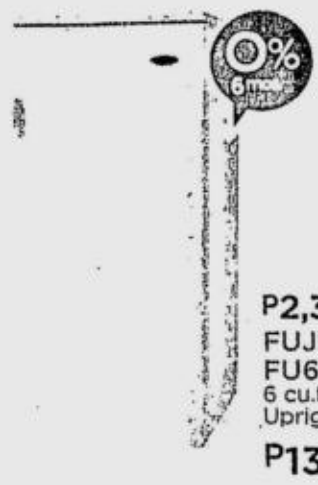
FUJIDENZO
WS-55JC
5.5 kg Single Tub w/ Soak function
P2,998



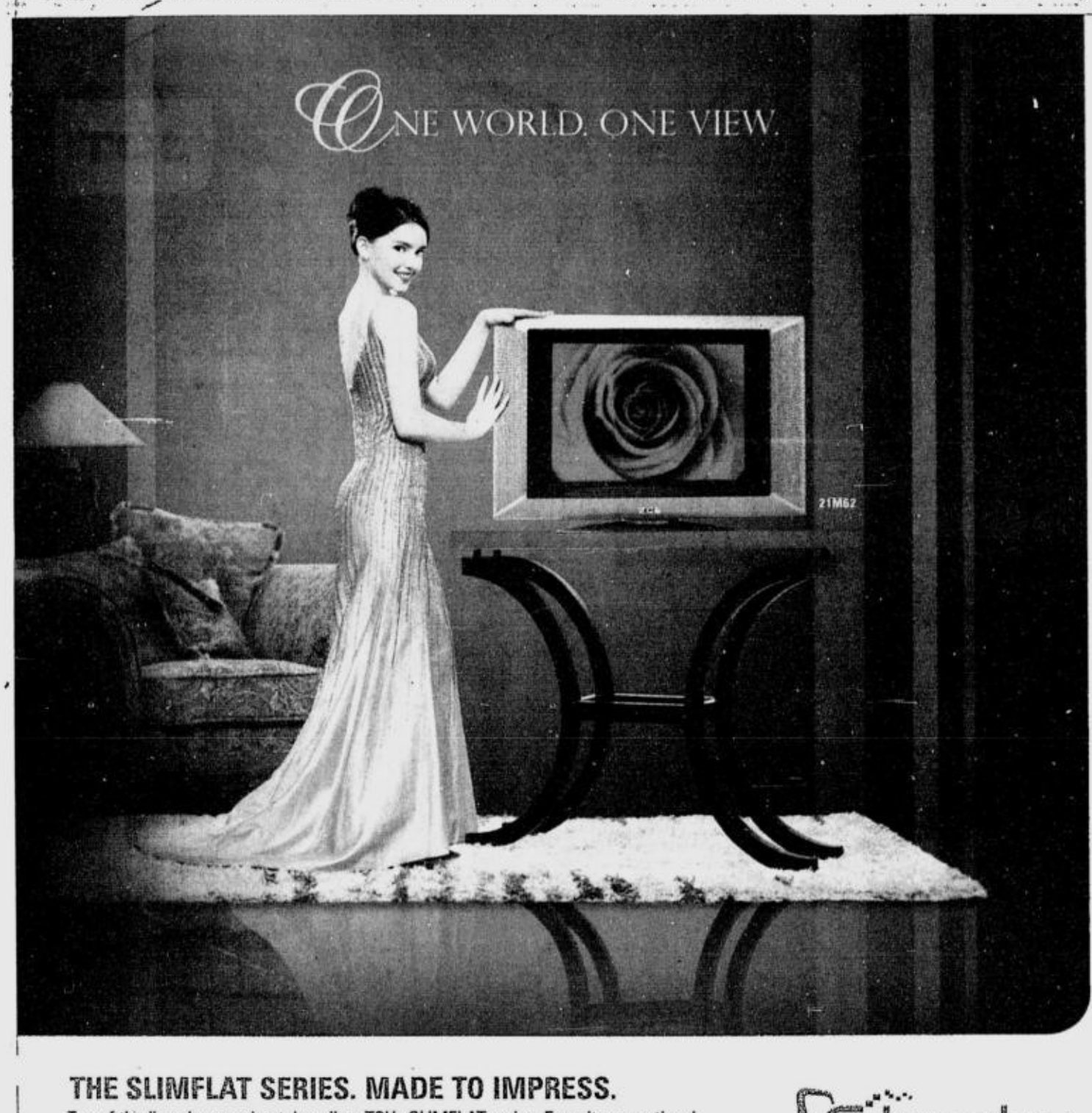
P2,666.50/mo.
WSN12 (SS)
12 cu.ft.
Top Mount,
P31,998



P1,666.50/mo.
WSG85
8 cu.ft. Top Mount,
Two Tone Color
P19,998

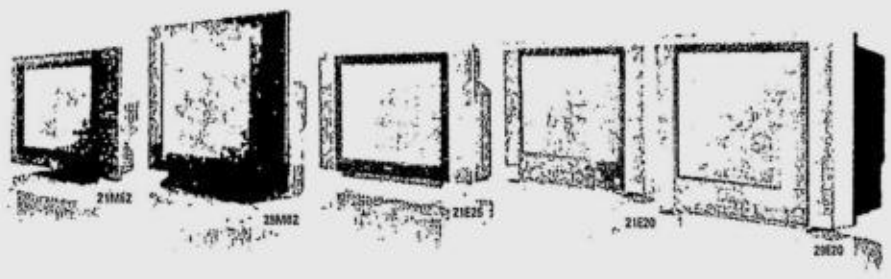


P2,316.33/mo.
FUJIDENZO
FU60K
6 cu.ft.
Upright Freezer
P13,898



THE SLIMFLAT SERIES. MADE TO IMPRESS.

Top-of-the-line elegance best describes TCL's SLIMFLAT series. From its exceptional glossy black finish, to its extraordinary widescreen format, you can tell that the SLIMFLAT model is made to impress. Amazing picture clarity plus a unique audio experience prove that the SLIMFLAT series is definitely world-class.



Slimflat

Comb Filter · AV/DVD Input · LCD Design

JANUS 2007 DE L'INDUSTRIE AWARDEE

NATIONWIDE WARRANTY
TCL offers a **4-YEAR WARRANTY ON PICTURE TUBE AND A 2-YEAR WARRANTY ON GENUINE PARTS AND SERVICES** that are honored at over 130 service centers nationwide, at no extra cost! With TCL, you can count on reliable customer service and expect speedy and professional assistance.

RCA in the USA is TCL in Asia.

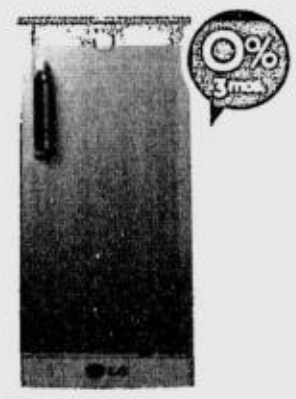
TCL SUN, INC. 1901 Richville Corporate Tower, Madrigal Business Park, Ayala Alabang, Muntinlupa City
Tel nos.: 7723206, 7724209, 8074880 loc 112. Nationwide Service Center: 8083138 loc. 125, 8083460
HOTLINE: 8425411

The Creative Life TCL

ABENSON

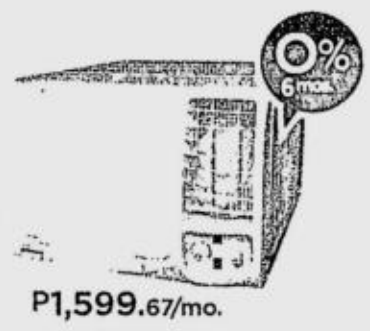
LG WP610N **P6,198**
4.0 kg
Twin Tub

P1,166.33/mo.
SHARP ES4310TWS
4.3 kg
Twin Tub
P6,998

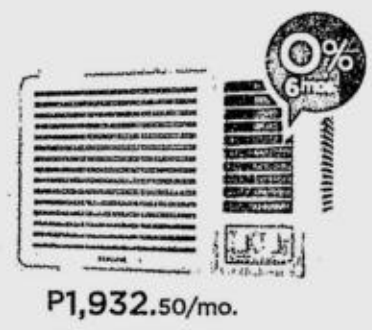


P3,432.67/mo.
LG
GN-U201CLS
6.5 cu.ft.
1 Door, Semi-automatic
P10,298

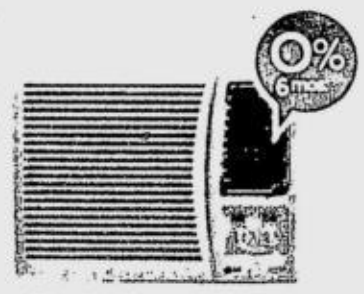
P4,683.33/mo.
ELECTROLUX
WR-3106DTSX
10 cu.ft.
2 Door
Less P1,800
P28,100



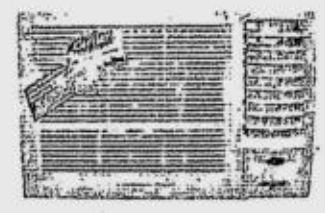
P1,599.67/mo.
CONDURA
WCON006EC
0.5 HP
with Timer
P9,598



P1,932.50/mo.
SAMSUNG
AW-07P2A
.75 HP, with Timer
P11,595



P2,491.33/mo.
LG
LA100MG
1 HP, Manual
P14,948



CARRIER
WCARM014EA
1.5 HP, Manual
P17,748

Visuals, specifications, prices, & promotions may change without prior notice. 0% applicable provided monthly bill is paid in full. Subject to bank terms and conditions. Prices applicable until December 31, 2007.

Celebrate A Season of Wishful Thinking, Gift Giving & Smart Shopping at Abenson!

SHOP NOW AT ANY ABENSON BRANCH NEAR YOU! BATANGAS Bay City Mall (043) 723-6790/0934 • Fiesta World Mall Lipa (043) 757-3142 **BOHOL** Island City Mall (038) 501-6206/0934 **BULACAN** Waltermart Plaridel (044) 795-3271-73 **CAVITE** Emperor Mall Rosario (046) 438-5450 and 57 • Lotus Mall Imus (046) 515-5749 & 51 • Robinsons Place Imus (046) 471-8020/30 • Waltermart Carmona (046) 430-2702-03 • Waltermart Desmariñas (046) 416-2104 & 07 • Waltermart General Trias (046) 419-1137 **CADANATUAN** NE Pacific Mall (044) 940-1491-82 **CUBAO** New Farmer's Plaza 911-1103/1494 **GAPAN** Waltermart Gapan (044) 486-7647 **KALOOKAN** Ever Grand Central 363-3346/5246 **LAGUNA** Ayala Pavillion Mall Biñan (049) 411-4510-11 • Ultramart San Pablo (049) 562-7034 • Waltermart Calamba Telfax: 520-8209 • Waltermart Sta. Rosa (049) 534-4669 & 19 **LAS PIÑAS** Pamplona 872-4320/0577 **LEGASPI** LCC Mall (052) 480-7949 • Pacific Mall (052) 480-6266/820-4088 **LUCENA** Pacific Mall (042) 373-0443 **MAKATI** Greenbelt-4 758-2315 • Glorietta-1 812-7745/9428 • Waltermart Makati 812-2882/1352 **MALABON** Malabon Citisquare 287-0478/0344 **MANDALUYONG** Sheridan 631-5180/8161 loc 122 **MANILA** Harrison Plaza 521-8560 & 63 • Puregold Tayuman 252-5786-87 • Robinsons Ermita 536-7914 **MARIKINA** Riverbank Mall 941-3811/5003 **MUNTINLUPA** Alabang 850-8850/8914 • Filinvest Festival Mall 842-2540/2951 • Metropolis 809-8174/8921 **NAGA** LCC Metro (054) 473-6003 **ORTIGAS** Robinsons Galleria 632-9101/05 • Shangri-La 638-8017 to 19 • St. Francis Square 633-1362 to 64 **PASIG** Puregold Buting 641-4452 • Ever Gotesco Pasig 656-6643-44 **PAMPANGA** Nepo Mall Angeles (045) 888-9085 • Puregod Dau (045) 892-4295 **PARANAQUE** Jaka Plaza 829-9325/2686-87 • Pearl Plaza 851-8401 & 03 **PASAY** Metropoint Mall 833-7829/8196 **QUEZON CITY** Trinoma 901-3550 to 52 • Circle C Congressional 927-9390/9520 • Eastwood Libis 687-1613/1698 • Ever Gotesco Commonwealth 951-4575/8991 • Fairview Center Mall 939-7906 • Puregold Commonwealth 932-2932/3506 • Puregold E. Rodriguez 784-1234/1313 • SM City North Edsa 920-9151 to 53 • Waltermart E. Rodriguez 722-7263 **RIZAL** Sta. Lucia East Grand Mall Phase1 645-0402/0404 • Sta. Lucia East Grand Mall Phase2 681-5301 to 05 **SAN JUAN** Greenhills 721-1719/0590 **TAGUIG** Market Market 886-6620/8491 **TARLAC** Plaza Luisita (045) 985-1245 **VALENZUELA** Puregold Valenzuela 277-9538/38/39

NOW OPEN: PUREGOLD TAYTAY and ABENSON CEBU